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A view of Baitur Rahman Mosque, Silver Spring MD

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MUSLIM COMMUNITY
United States of America

Muslims who believe in the Messiah,
Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani(as)

Gift of Sight 2012 Eye Camp, Guatemala
Organized by Humanity First USA

An educational and spiritual monthly publication

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Acronyms for salutations used in this publication

saw:	sallallahu alaihi wasallam (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him)
as:	alaihissalam (Peace be upon him)
ra:	radhi allahu 'anhu (May Allah be pleased with him/her)
rh:	rahimahullahu ta'ala (May Allah shower mercy on him/her)
aba:	ayyada hullah ta'ala binasrihil aziz (May Allah strengthen him with His mighty help)
swt:	subhana wa ta'ala (Holy and Exalted)

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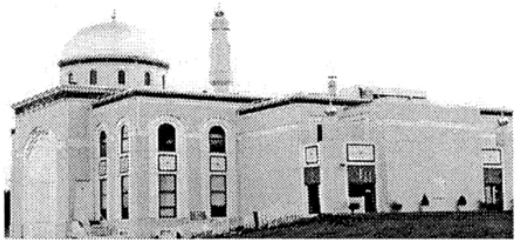

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Al-Qur'an

وَ هُوَ الَّذِیْٓ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً ۚ فَاَخْرَجْنَا بِهٖ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَیْءٍ
فَاَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُّخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُّتَرَاكِبًا ۚ وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِنْ طَلْعِهَا
قِنْوَانٌ دَانِیَةٌ وَّجَنّٰتٍ مِّنْ اَعْنَابٍ وَّ الزَّیْتُوْنَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا وَّ غَیْرَ
مُتَشَابِهٍ ؕ اُنْظُرُوْٓا اِلٰی ثَمَرِهٖٓ وَیَنْعِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ فِیْ ذٰلِكُمْ لَاٰیٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ یُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝

And it is He Who sends down water from the clouds, and We bring forth therewith every kind of growth; then We bring forth with that green foliage wherefrom We produce clustered grain. And from the date-palm, out of its sheaths, *come forth* bunches hanging low. *And We produce therewith* gardens of grapes, and the olive and the pomegranate - similar and dissimilar. Look at the fruit thereof when it bears fruit, and the ripening thereof. Surely, in this are Signs for a people who believe. (6:100)

Commentary:

Revelation is likened here to rainwater, nd the verse answers the question, why, if revelation is indeed a blessing, is there discord and strife whenever a Prophet is raised? It says that just as after rainfall all kinds of vegetation grows up, both bad and good, according to the seeds lying concealed in the earth, similarly, at the advent of a Divine Messenger, men, who so far had remained mixed up, become divided into good and bad. The word "like and unlike" imply that whereas some fruits resemble, and some differ from, each other. This may apply either to fruits of different kinds, which resemble one another in certain respects and differ in others, or to fruits of the same kind which, although resembling one another in the main points, differ from one another in minor details, some tasting sweeter than others and some varying in color and size. The same is the case with those persons who accept a Prophet and follow Divine guidance. whereas they bear great resemblance to each other in one respect, they differ in another. Some are morally and spiritually more advanced than others. Again some are more advanced in one phase of spiritual growth, others are more advanced in another. They attain different stages of spiritual perfection and develop different characteristics according to their respective natural capacities and dispositions. The words "the ripening thereof" refers to the anology of the ripeniong of fruit. Just as it is unfair to judge a fruit by an unripe specimen, similarly it is unfair to find fault with the fruits of revelation because some believers are as yet in the process of spiritual development and have not attained perfection.

Al-Hadith

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللّٰهِ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: كَانَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ اِذَا خَطَبَ احْمَرَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ وَ عَلاَ صَوْتُه‘ وَ اشْتَدَّ غَضَبُه‘ حَتّٰى كَاَنَّه‘ مُنْذِرُ جَيْشٍ يَقُوْلُ: صَبَّحَكُمْ وَ مَسَّاكُمْ ـ وَ يَقُوْلُ: بُعِثْتُ اَنَا وَ السَّاعَةُ كَهَاتَيْنِ وَ يَقْرُنُ بَيْنَ اِصْبَعَيْهِ السَّبَّابَةِ وَ الْوُسْطٰى وَ يَقُوْلُ: اَمَّا بَعْدُ فَاِنَّ خَيْرَ الْحَدِيْثِ كِتَابُ اللّٰهِ وَ خَيْرَ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ وَشَرَّ الْاُمُوْرِ مُحْدَثَاتُهَا وَ كُلُّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلاَلَةٌ ثُمَّ يَقُوْلُ: اَنَا اَوْلٰى بِكُلِّ مُؤْمِنٍ مِنْ نَفْسِهٖ ‘ مَنْ تَرَكَ مَالاً فَلِاَهْلِهٖ ‘ وَمَنْ تَرَكَ دَيْنًا اَوْ ضِيَاعًا فَاِلَيَّ وَ عَلَيَّ ـ

Hadhat Jābir[ra] relates: When the Messenger[saw] of Allah delivered a sermon his eyes would become red, his voice would rise and his anger would increase as if he was alerting us against an enemy host. He would say: "The enemy is advancing against you in the morning; he is advancing against you in the evening. He would say: 'My advent and the Last Hour are juxtaposed as my two fingers; and holding his forefinger and middle finger tightly together would say: 'The best discourse is the Book of Allāh and the best example is the example of Muhammad; the worst practice is the injection of new elements in the Faith, and every innovation is a misguidance.' He would then say: 'I am closer to every believer than his own self. If a believer leaves assets they would accrue to his heirs. If he dies as an insolvent or is survived by dependents, the responsibility lies on me.' "

(Muslim kitābal jumu'ah bāb takhfīfuṣṣalāt walkhuṭbah).

SAYINGS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH[AS]

God's Beauty and Beneficence

God's law of nature and the book of nature, which have been in existence since the creation of man, teach us that to establish a strong relationship with God it is necessary to have experienced His Beneficence and His Beauty. By Beneficence is meant instances of the moral qualities of God Almighty which a person might have personally experienced in his own being. For instance, God may have become his Guardian when he was helpless and weak and an orphan. Or God may have fulfilled his need at a time of want; or God may have helped him at a time of great sorrow; or God may have guided him without the intervention of a preceptor or guide in his search after God.

By His beauty also are meant His attributes which appear in the guise of beneficence, for instance, His Perfect Power or His tenderness or His kindness or His *Rabubiyyat* or His compassion, or His general *Rabubiyyat* and those common bounties which are available in large numbers for the comfort of man. There is also His knowledge which a person obtains through Prophets and thereby saves himself from death and ruin. Also His attribute that He hears the supplications of the restless and fatigued ones. Also His excellence that He inclines towards those who incline towards Him, even more so. All this is comprised in God's beauty. The very same attributes when they are experienced by a person become His Beneficence with reference to him, though they are only His Beauty with reference to others.

When a person experiences in the shape of beneficence those Divine attributes which constitute His beauty his faith is strengthened beyond measure and he is drawn towards God as iron is drawn towards a magnet. His love for God increases manifold and his trust in God becomes very strong. Having experienced that all his good is in God, his hopes in God are strengthened. He continues to incline towards God naturally, without any pretension, and finds himself dependent upon God's help every moment and believes firmly through the contemplation of Divine attributes that he will be successful, because he has experienced in his own person many instances of God's grace, favour and generosity. Therefore, his supplications proceed from the fountain of power and certainty and his resolve becomes very firm and unshakable.

In the end, having observed Divine favours and bounties, the light of certainty enters with great force into him and his ego is altogether consumed. On account of the frequent contemplation of the greatness and power of God, his heart becomes the House of God. As the human soul never leaves his body while a person is alive, in the same way, the certainty that enters into him from God, the Mighty and Glorious, never leaves him. His pure soul surges inside him all the time and he speaks under the instruction of his soul. Verities and insights flow out of him and the tent of the Lord of Honour and Majesty is ever set in his heart. The delight of certainty, sincerity and love flows through him like water whereby every limb of his is nourished. His eyes exhibit the brightness of nourishment and his forehead reveals its light. His countenance appears as if it had been washed by the rain of Divine love and his tongue partakes fully of this freshness. All his limbs exhibit a brightness, as after a spring shower an attractive freshness is revealed in the branches, leaves, flowers and fruits of trees. The body of a person on whom this spirit has not descended and who has not been refreshed by it is like a corpse. This freshness and joyousness cannot be described in words and can never be acquired by the dead heart which has not been refreshed by the fountain of the light of certainty. On the contrary, it stinks. But the one who has been bestowed this light, and inside whom this fountain has burst forth, exhibits as one of his signs that all the time and in everything, in every word and in every action, he receives power from God. This is his delight and his comfort and he cannot live without it. *[Review of Religions-Urdu, Vol. I, p. 189]*

Synopsis of Friday Sermon Delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V[aba], on November 23, 2012 at Baitul Futuh Mosque, Morden, UK

Shermeen Butt

We are currently going through the Islamic month of Muharram-ul-Haram which is the first month of the Muslim calendar. Generally we exchange good wishes at the start of a new year. Last Friday, when Muharram had started, someone expressed good wishes to Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih; but what was that about? The same day there had been an explosion in Iraq attacking Shia people, in which dozens were martyred. Indeed, we usually greet each other at the start of a new year, however at the start of the lunar year, the large majority of decent Muslims who have compassion for the *Ummah*, express concern and fear. This is because explosions, murder and mayhem take place during this month. In spite of governmental announcements and joint statements issued by various religious leaders of different sects, either Sunni and Shia ,hostilities start or somewhere or the other Shias are attacked by other sects or mischievous elements. Now those with vested interests and extremist leanings play into the hands of others and take dozens of Shia lives. These include people who have no religious disagreement or indeed objectives; rather, their objectives are political. Usually the tenth day of Muharram is most dangerous and in the eastern countries, that date falls today. At times, limits of barbarity are exceeded on this day. Currently, attacks have started on different Shia gatherings. In Pakistan many lives have been lost in attacks in Rawalpindi, Quetta, Karachi and Swat. In Rawalpindi, attacks were carried out day before yesterday and again yesterday. Twenty three people lost their lives yesterday. When they get a chance, Shias take their revenge. Muslims are in a very strange and pitiable situation.

It is these religious or other disagreements which are also creating gulf between Muslim countries. In countries where a minority sect is in power, extremist reaction is forthcoming from the majority sect. Where the minority sect gets a chance, it attacks the majority sect and on this basis and in the name of fighting terrorism governments too take innocent lives. Thousands of their own countrymen are killed, as it is happening in Syria. This is also the reason why the anti-Islam powers are free to have their way. Israel's attack on Palestine is because there is no unity among the Muslims. There is no Muslim country where moral values are not trampled upon and oppression against each other is not taking place due to religious differences. In light of this, foreign powers too close in on them. If only the Muslim countries wised up and became one. If only they took lesson from their forefathers and observed history. The powerful anti-Islam Roman Empire tried to take advantage of the differences between Hadhrat Ali[ra] and Hadhrat Muawiya[ra]. In order to restore their repute and while considering the Muslim strength weakened, they tried to attack. When Hadhrat Muawiya[ra] came to know he sent a message to the Roman king that he should not take advantage of their mutual differences and attack Muslims. He said in the instance of an attack, he would be the first general to fight them on behalf of Hadhrat Ali[ra]. And today they join forces with others and hatch plans against Muslim governments. Yet, they have agreement on one matter and that is planning against the *Jama'at* of the Muhammadan Messiah and to declare Ahmadis, who have sincere, heart-felt belief in the Kalima, outside the pale of Islam. They do not care what the Prophet[saw] in whose name they carry out all this, said in this regard. In principle, he[saw] said no one had seen what was in the other person's heart as far as faith was concerned. If only they understood and those who are

called *Ulema* (religious leaders) rather than leading the public astray, told them the truth based on justice and if only they associated themselves with the one who is sent from God so that all sectarianism and along with it oppression could be stopped. So that the concept of religious war was eradicated and the beautiful teaching of Islam as given by the Messiah of the age was disseminated and thus the enemy's power was eliminated and people gathered under the banner of the Holy Prophet[saw].

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih[aba] said he had begun with reference to Muharram and would present some extracts from the writings of the Promised Messiah[as] so that hundreds of thousands of Ahmadis may hear, those who are new and the young may understand how the Promised Messiah[as] upheld the honor of holy persons. How he eradicated the *Sunni Shia* differences and taught ways to be as one *Ummah*. Those outside our *Jama'at* who listen to the Friday sermons may also appreciate the true illustration of '...tender among themselves...' (48:30). How long will they assume that they are paying the dues of Islam by posturing to hold conventions and through extremism? Whether the absence of peace and restlessness in the Muslim countries is due to mutual oppression or due to the anti-Islam powers, its antidote and the power to restore the glory of Islam is now only in the hands of one commissioned by God, who is the true and ardent devotee of the Holy Prophet[saw]; who is appointed for the mission to spread his teachings. If Muslims wish to reclaim their unity, if they wish to save themselves from the attacks of others, they will have to eradicate the Sunni Shia differences and follow the Islam brought by the Holy Prophet[saw] in which there was no division. The Companions of the Prophet[saw] were like guiding stars, the status of some of them excelled others. The status of Hadhrat Abu Bakr[ra] in the sight of God and the Prophet[saw] surpassed all others. The stature of Hadhrat Umer[ra], Hadhrat Usman[ra], Hadhrat Ali[ra] Imam Hassan[ra] and Imam Hussein[ra] follows degree by degree.

The Promised Messiah[as] writes in his book '*Sirrul Khalafa*': 'I have been given the knowledge that Hadhrat Abu Bakr Sideeq[ra] had the greatest glory and highest stature among all the Companions. Without doubt he was the first *Khalifa* and verses regarding *Khilafat* were revealed about him.' He also wrote: 'By God, he [Hadhrat Abu Bakr[ra]] was Islam's second Adam and the first manifestation of the best among mankind (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). Although he was not a Prophet, he had the strengths of Prophets.' He also stated: 'Allah the Exalted knew that Hadhrat Abu Bakr Sideeq[ra] was the most valiant and righteous and was the most beloved of the Holy Prophet[saw]. He was a victorious general, who was completely absorbed in the love of the chief among creation. From the very beginning he was his confidant and helper in his tasks. This is why God assured His Prophet in time of adversity through him and made the title of Sideeq [the truthful] specific to him. He was a close friend of the Prophet[saw] and God granted him with the robe of honor of: '...he was one of the two...' (9:40) and included him in His special servants'

Malfoozat record that the Promised Messiah[as] said: 'By becoming a muslim at the time of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) the first *Khalifa*, who was a great merchant, gave incomparable help. He was granted the status of being called 'Sideeq' and was the leading friend and first *Khalifa*. It is written that he was returning from a trade trip and had not yet reached Makkah when along the way he met a man and asked him for any latest news. The man said there was no latest news other than that his friend had claimed Prophethood. Abu Bakr[ra] said on the spot that if he had made such a claim, it would be truthful.' The Promised Messiah[as] also stated: 'Hadhrat Abu Bakr[ra] gave all his property in the way of God and assumed a destitute life for himself. But what did Allah the Exalted grant him for this? He made him the king of entire Arabia and gave Islam a new lease of life through his hand and demonstrated triumph over apostate Arab and conferred on him what was beyond anyone's imagination.'

The Promised Messiah[as] stated about Hadhrat Umer[ra]: 'Do you realize how high is the stature of Hadhrat Umer[ra] among the Companions? So much so that at times, Qur'an used to be revealed in accordance with his viewpoint. A Hadith states about him that Satan runs from the shadow of Umer[ra]. Another *Hadith* states: 'If

there was to be a Prophet after me, it would have been Umer.' Third *Hadith* is: 'There were *Muhaddis* (narrator of Traditions) in earlier people. If there is any *Muhaddis* in this *Ummah*, it is Umer.' The Promised Messiah[as] also stated: 'Umer also used to receive revelation. He did not consider himself to be anything and did not wish to be a partner in the *Imamat e Haqqa* (true leadership) that God in Heaven created on this earth. On the contrary he declared himself to be a lowly servant and this is why God's grace made him a deputy of the *Imamat e Haqqa*.' The Promised Messiah[as] writes in his book '*Hujjatullah*': 'Two persons buried adjacent to the Holy Prophet[saw] were pious, pure, wholesome and accepted (by Allah) and God deemed them friends of the Holy Prophet[saw] in life as well as after their death. Indeed, it was friendship that endured till the end and it is rare to find a model of it. Felicitations to them that they spent their lives with the Holy Prophet[saw] and were appointed *Khalifa* in his city and in his place and were buried adjacent to him and were brought close to the paradise of his shrine and on the Day of Judgment will be raised with him.'

The Promised Messiah[as] writes in *Sirrul Khalafa*: 'My Lord has made it evident to me that Hadhrat Abu Bakr[ra], Hadhrat Umer Farooq[ra] and Hadhrat Usman[ra] were pious and had faith and were from among those people who are chosen by God and are made exclusive for His conferments.' He wrote that God made them doors of Islam and the vanguards of God's army.

The Promised Messiah[as] stated about Hadhrat Ali[ra]: 'He was extremely righteous and pure and was from those people who are the most beloved of the Gracious God. He was from a good family and was from among the chiefs of the time. He was the lion of the Supreme God and was the youth of the Kind God. He was very generous and had a clean heart. He was that unique valiant who did not move away from the battlefield even if an army of enemy stood against him. He spent a life of destitution and attained a high status in temperance. He distributed wealth, alleviated pain and anguish and was foremost in care of orphans, poor and neighbors. He displayed great bravery in different expeditions and was wondrously skillful in wielding the sword and spear. In addition to this, he spoke mellifluously and eloquently. His words had very deep effect and he removed erosion of hearts with his words and illuminated hearts with the light of reason. He was aware of every kind of manner/style and experts in various fields would approach him vanquished and apologetic. He was excellent in every quality and in eloquence. Rejection of his excellences is tantamount to committing shamelessness. He used to promote sympathy for the helpless and would instruct to feed those who were content as well as those who insisted to be fed. He was among the chosen people of Allah the Exalted and excelled in deep understanding of the Holy Qur'an. He had an amazing insight of the understanding of the profound points of the Qur'an.'

The Promised Messiah[as] also stated about Hadhrat Ali[ra]: 'A close relative who was stirred with love and faith, covered his face and laid on the bed of the Holy Prophet[saw] out of bravery and on the signal of the Prophet, so that the spies of the enemy would not investigate the leaving of the Prophet and would stay around thinking him to be the Prophet.'

The Promised Messiah[as] stated: 'I have an exquisite likeness with Ali[ra] and Hussein[ra] and no one apart from the Lord of the East and the West knows this secret. Most certainly, I love Ali[ra] and both his sons and have enmity with whoever has enmity with them.'

He also stated: 'In my view it was very good that Hadhrat Hassan[ra] stepped aside from *Khilafat.* Thousands had been killed and he did not want more people to be killed...As this action of Hadhrat Hassan[ra] is contrary to Shia , therefore they do not fully accede to I*mam* Hassan[ra]. Indeed, we praise them both. Fact is that each individual has diverse strengths. Hadhrat *Imam* Hassan[ra] did not want internal fighting among Muslims to increase leading to more killing; he kept preference of peace in view. Hadhrat *Imam* Hussein[ra] did not choose to take *Bai'at* at the hand of a wicked man because this was detrimental to faith. They both had good inten-

tions: deeds are judged by motives. It is a different matter that there was Islamic progress through the hand of Yazid. It is the grace of God the Exalted, if He so wills, even a wicked person can bring about progress. Yazid's son was a good person.'

The Promised Messiah[as]: 'It should always be remembered that Prophets and similarly honest and truthful people of God come in this world as models/exemplars. A person who does not try to be according to their model but is prepared to prostrate before them and consider them as relievers of needs can never be acclaimed in the sight of God the Exalted. Rather, such a person will see that after death the Imam will be weary of him. Likewise, those who exaggerate the status of Hadhrat Ali[ra] or Imam Hussein[ra] are tantamount to idolizing them; they are not from among the followers of *Imam* Hussein[ra]. This cannot please *Imam* Hussein[ra]. Prophets always come as models to be followed and the truth is that without following them there is no point.'

Admonishing Ahmadis, the Promised Messiah[as] said that it should be very clear that anyone who says that God forbid Hadhrat Hussein[ra] did not take *Bai'at* of the *Khalifa* and was rebellious is a great liar. He said that it is our belief that Yazid was an impure person who did not fulfill what a true believer signifies. Love of world had blinded him whereas Hadhrat Hussein[ra] was pure and among those chosen people whom God purifies Himself. He was among those who are of Paradise. His devotion to God is a model for us. Destroyed is the heart who is his enemy and successful is the heart that demonstrates his love by practice. It is extreme lack of faith to deride Hadhrat Hussein[ra], one who does this, wastes his faith.

With reference to Hadhrat Hassan and Hadhrat Hussein[ra] the Promised Messiah[as] states: 'The term spiritual progeny is extremely appropriate for the beloveds of God. It was their spiritual inheritance from their spiritual maternal grandfather, which no plunderer can plunder and they are the inheritors of those gardens which no other can usurp. Thus, this evil notion has currently come into some Islamic sects because their soul has become dead and it has had no measure of being spiritual progeny. Therefore, as non-recipients of spiritual wealth, they have lost their sense and their hearts have become short-sighted. Which person of faith would argue that Hadhrat Imam Hussein[ra] and Imam Hassan[ra] were God's chosen people, that they were persons of excellences, were pure and chaste and were leaders of guidance. Without doubt they were the progeny of the Holy Prophet[saw] in both respects. People who have knowledge are of the creed that even if Hadhrat Hussein[ra] and Hadhrat Hassan[ra] were not the physical progeny of the Holy Prophet[saw], since due to their spiritual connection, they had been considered progeny in the Heaven, without doubt they would have been the inheritors of his spiritual wealth. The mortal body has relationships; could the soul not have any connections? Rather, it is proven from *Ahadith* and the Holy Qur'an that souls too have connections and have friendship and enmity from the very beginning. A sensible person can think if it is a source of pride to be progeny of the Prophet on an eternal and everlasting level or to be the progeny of the Prophet on a physical level which is nothing without righteousness, purity and faith. No one should infer from this that we infringe on the dignity of the family of the Holy Prophet[saw]. On the contrary, the objective of this writing is that it is not worthy of the dignity of Imam Hussein[ra] and Hassan[ra] to be the progeny of the Holy Prophet[saw] only on a physical level because it is meaningless without a spiritual connection. Only those have true connection with the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) who are included in his progeny on a spiritual basis. The spiritual light and the spiritual knowledge of Prophets is like the offspring of Prophets which is created from their pure beings. Those who attain a new life from this spiritual light and knowledge, in fact obtain a new birth. It is these who are known as progeny of the Holy Prophet[saw] on a spiritual level.

Each Ahmadi and Muslim who truly follows the teachings of the Holy Prophet[saw] will be included in his progeny. This is the path treading on which is essential for every Muslim. The status of each holy person should be acknowledged and honored. Mutual hostilities, murder and mayhem should be stopped. It will not be too far-fetched if anti-Islam powers had a hand in the current disorder, murder and mayhem, by dividing the

Muslims or by financing them. The attacks on Shias are being carried out by an organization which is deemed as a terrorist group by the government and it is reported about them that they are not Muslims. May God have mercy on the *Ummah*.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih[aba] said that he wished to say to Ahmadis that while other Muslim sects take revenge from each other, but after coming into the *Bai'at* of the Promised Messiah[as] and in spite of all the persecution that all these sects are perpetrating against us, we should not even think of revenge. What is needed is that after every persecution we should enhance in righteousness and piety and pray to God more than before and forge a better connection with Him.

We have the practical model of Hadhrat Imam Hussein[ra] before us and it is a guide for us. In light of this Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood[ra] advised the *Jama'at* in a poetic composition:

They make you Hussein-like and themselves become like Yazid
What a good bargain it is; let the enemy hurl arrows

By giving us lesson in steadfastness, Hadhrat *Imam* Hussein[ra] has shown us the way to Paradise. Prayers should be made especially these days, during Muharram, for our own steadfastness and each Ahmadi should abundantly say the prayer 'O Lord, everything is subservient to You. O Lord, protect us, help us and have mercy on us.' It has been stated before that this prayer is very important for security. The prayer: 'O Allah, we make you a shield against the enemy and we seek Your protection against their evil designs' should also be said abundantly. As said many times, blessings and salutations (*Durud*) should be invoked a lot. May God keep each Ahmadi safe and help us against our enemies. By virtue of His mercy, may He keep each Ahmadi safe from the enemies of the *Jama'at* and may each evil they plan against us rebound on them. May He include us in the true progeny of the Holy Prophet[saw], as explained by the Promised Messiah[as] that real progeny is the spiritual progeny. We need to constantly self-reflect. When invoking blessings and salutations (*Durud*) we should reflect on how much beneficence do we attain from it. How much do we live by the word of the Holy Qur'an! May our sacrifices bring pure-natured souls in the fold of Ahmadiyyat, true Islam and may we witness triumph.

Abundant prayers should be made that God may save innocent souls in the Israeli aggression against Palestine. Israel is issuing statements on the lines that they attacked because they cannot live in a state of fear. Indeed, they were the first to attack and kill Palestinians and when the Palestinians responded it was said that they were creating fear. This is strange case of bullying; a strange way indeed that people of this world are adopting and it is only because there is no unity among Muslims. May God have mercy on innocent Palestinians and save them from every kind of cruelty.

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HADITH

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said: "There was a person who had wronged himself excessively. At the time of his death, he made a will to his sons that when he dies, they should cremate his body, then grind the remains to a fine powder and sprinkle it in the air over the sea. He (the man) said, 'By Allah, I fear that if my Lord got hold of me, He will give me such punishment which will be unprecedented.' He[saw] said: 'So they did that to him.' Allah ordered the earth: 'Return to Me whatever you have taken (i.e., to return each and every particle of that person's ashes).' Thereupon it stood up as the very same person. He asked him: 'What provoked you to do that?' He said: 'O Lord! Your awe or fear made me to do so.' Thus, Allah forgave him.' "

(Bukhari kitabuttauhid, Ibni Majah kitabuzzuhud bab dhikrudhdhunub, MusnadAhmad, p 269/2)

A PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF HADHRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH V'S TOUR TO USA 2012

By Abid Khan

Finding Out about the USA Tour

Since early 2012 I had been hearing that *Hazoor-Aqdas* would Insha'Allah grace the 2012 USA and Canada *Jalsa Salanas* with his presence. I was in regular contact with members of the *Jama'at* from both countries about the media plans for Hazoor's visit. With each day that passed I could tell that their anticipation and eagerness to host the *Khalifa* was increasing. Furthermore, many of my family members in the United States also spoke about their happiness that *Hazoor-Aqdas* would *Insha'Allah* soon be with them. In my heart I kept thinking how this tour promised to be a very historic one.

Just a few days before the tour, *Hazoor-Aqdas* asked me if I would be sad whilst he was away. I responded by saying that Hazoor had not even yet departed and I was already sad and already missing him. It was then that *Hazoor-Aqdas,* with a radiant smile on his face, said I should get ready to travel with him on the tour.

I will never forget the feeling in my heart for those few seconds; it was beating faster and louder than perhaps was healthy and I strained to control my tears. Hearing these words from anyone would have given me great joy, but to hear them directly from our beloved *Khalifa* filled my heart with unparalleled joy.

No matter how much I thanked Allah for this opportunity it would never be enough.

Departure from London

I was soon told that we would be travelling on 16th June 2012 and that I should report at *Masjid* Fazl by 8am. I was very anxious, that God forbid, I sleep-in and thus be late to report. I set more than ten alarms on my iPhone to make sure I was awake in good time and I also asked my wife, who was in America visiting her parents, to call me to make sure I was awake! The night was very disturbed because the fear of not waking on time was such that it actually stopped me from sleeping the majority of the night!

As it turned out, thankfully I did wake up early and was ready in good time. I went and dropped my luggage at the Mosque before returning home briefly to lock up my home for the next month. As I left my house I did a *dua* in which I thanked Allah for the opportunity and prayed that on the tour I did not do anything that would displease my beloved *Khalifa* and I prayed that I would never conduct myself in a way that could ever reflect badly on Hazoor-Aqdas and his *Qafila.*

All *Qafila* members, except for *Hazoor-Aqdas* and Hadhrat Begum Sahiba, left early for the airport.

As we attempted to pass the first security hurdle, both myself and Mahmood Khan Sahib (Security) were red-flagged and were asked to report to a separate counter. Whilst we were being dealt with, I saw that *Hazoor-Aqdas* and Hadhrat Begum Sahiba had arrived and had passed through to the Departure area. At that moment my heart sank a little and I was internally panicking. My heart was racing with fear that due to the security delay we might miss our flight.

Thankfully, after about ten minutes we were told that everything was ok and that we were free to go through. And so when we entered the Departure area, I saw that *Hazoor-Aqdas* was sitting on a bench waiting. I felt so much love for Hazoor that he was waiting for the entire *Qafila*, rather than proceeding ahead.

Much later on in the tour I jokingly reminded Mahmood Khan Sahib about the incident and I said that in my heart I feared that my tour was over before it had even began! We both had a good laugh about this and he shared that at the time even he too had been a little concerned!

We proceeded towards the airplane. First we had to take a train and then a bus. It seemed as though British Airways wanted us to sample all forms of transport that day!

Just before getting on the bus, five or six of us were once again stopped and given an extra security checking. I had travelled to America a few times in the past few years and so I was quite used to such security measures, however I think for some others it was a new experience.

As I finally made it through the final security check I walked towards the bus and, as I entered, Hazoor asked me with a smile what they had been asking me. I answered that they did not ask me much, but they did search me very thoroughly!

Due to the many checks some of us faced at Heathrow, I was quite sure that when we arrived in the United States we would face extra security on that side also…

I could not have been more wrong.

Arrival in Chicago

When we arrived at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport as soon as we left the plane we were guided to a private room just a few metres away.

Ameer Sahib USA and other *Jama'at* USA officials greeted *Hazoor-Aqdas*, whilst Hadhrat Begum Sahiba sat with some *Lajna* members. We were there for around fifteen minutes and then we were told that everything was fine and we were free to go.

The respect and dignity with which the USA received Hazoor was truly uplifting – it honestly seemed as though Allah Himself had made all of the arrangements.

In the past I had experienced that sometimes the USA Immigration Officers could be a little rude and certainly somewhat suspicious. Yet Allah has a special relationship with his *Khalifa* and it is He who makes sure that the dignity and honour of *Khilafat* is always maintained, *Alhamdulillah.*

We spent two days in Chicago. The first thing I noticed was the vast distances. Just to get to the Mosque for *Salat* used to take quite some time and this was something that was also the case when Hazoor's *Qafila* travelled to Ohio a couple of days later.

Visit to Sadiq Mosque

On 17 June 2012, *Hazoor-Aqdas* visited the Sadiq Mosque in Chicago. This was a historic Mosque because it was the first premises ever purchased by *Jama'at* USA soon after the arrival of Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Sadiq Sahib[ra]. Indeed the building had been the USA *Jama'at's* Headquarters until 1950.

As Hazoor arrived at the Mosque he was greeted by hundreds of Ahmadis, many of whom were African-American. The Ahmadis were truly overwhelmed and overjoyed to see Hazoor - many of them were crying, some raised powerful and loud slogans, whilst others sang *Nazms*. This was a scene that was to be repeated on numerous occasions throughout the tour.

Wherever Hazoor went, *Masha'Allah* hundreds and sometimes thousands of Ahmadis were there to greet him. Just from looking at their faces it became so apparent that such love was pure and could only have been instilled in people's hearts by Allah. Just being able to witness and watch such welcomes was truly faith inspiring.

Hazoor-Aqdas was shown around the Sadiq Mosque and as he was leaving Hazoor happened to see a series of framed portrait photographs that had been taken decades ago. Upon enquiring who the people in the photos were, *Hazoor-Aqdas* was informed that they were early converts to Ahmadiyyat who had converted many decades ago. *Hazoor-Aqdas* immediately instructed that the *Jama'at* should search for the progenies of those early Ahmadis and seek to bring them back into the fold of Ahmadiyyat.

Visit to Zion and drive past Lake Michigan

From the Sadiq Mosque we proceeded to the town of Zion in Illinois, which is well-known to all Ahmadis, as the town of the false prophet John Alexander Dowie.

We drove through the Chicago city centre on-route to Zion and were able to drive past Lake Michigan. We did not stop but just from driving past it was clear that it was a really beautiful lake.

As we drove past it, I thought to myself how the vast majority of people would choose to stop and enjoy such a beautiful and scenic sight. But *Hazoor-Aqdas* was not concerned for his own pleasure or enjoyment but was simply anxious to get to the next stop where the Ahmadi Muslims were waiting for him. It was another reminder of how fortunate Ahmadis were to have the institution of *Khilafat* – an institution that is a truly selfless. Our *Khalifa* desires only the well-being and progress of his *Jama'at.*

Zion is a small town, with a population of less than 30,000 people. I found it to be a depressing and sad town. The one exception was a building that had been purchased by the Ahmadiyya *Jama'at.* It was there that Hazoor's *Qafila* arrived and where he was again greeted by hundreds of Ahmadis, the majority of whom were African-American.

As Hazoor departed from his car, slogans of joy were raised and *Nazms* were recited. When I saw this, the very first thought that came to my mind was that in the same town where John Alexander Dowie had once cursed the Promised Messiah[as], today hundreds of people were there to welcome and greet the *Khalifatul Masih.* Whilst Dowie had long been forgotten, love for the Promised Messiah had permeated the hearts of many of the locals. It illustrated once again the help and support that Allah had blessed the Promised Messiah[as] with.

Hazoor-Aqdas spent the next couple of hours meeting with local Ahmadi Muslims. Each of them queued in the heat for long periods without any complaints because they were just anxious to meet with the *Khalifa.* And when they emerged from the *Mulaqat* their faces were either beaming with huge smiles or they were overcome with emotion, tears flowing from their eyes. This too was something that I would witness again and again during the course of the coming month.

After the *Mulaqats*, *Hazoor-Aqdas* was given a tour by car of the town. We drove to the cemetery where Dowie was buried and also the building where he lived. As I thought about Dowie I felt satisfaction, that through his evil acts, the world had come to see a real and clear proof of the truth of the Promised Messiah[as].

Dowie's insults had led to Allah taking action in favor of the Promised Messiah[as], which led to the famous headline in a US newspaper that '*Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is Great'*. Seeing the love for *Khilafat* in Zion more than a century after the passing of the Promised Messiah[as] was yet another sign that truly 'Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is Great'. *Alhamdulillah.*

American Lunch in Chicago!

We returned home late afternoon and so lunch was well after 4pm.

For many years I had heard about Chicago's famous 'deep-dish pizza' and when we sat for lunch I saw that our hosts had very kindly ordered some of this well-known pizza. I took one slice and it was huge and thick and enough to fill my stomach completely. It was also very delicious *Masha'Allah.*

I could now say that I had also tried one slice of the famous Chicago pizza!

Departure From Chicago and Visit to Dayton Mosque

On 18th June 2012, Hazoor's *Qafila* left Chicago and travelled to Ohio. It proved to be a very long and tiring day. On that day those of us who had travelled from London were able to get some kind of understanding of the vast distances that separated American cities.

After a drive of around 400km we arrived in Dayton at 8.15pm and visited the Fazl-i-Umar Mosque, which is the oldest purpose-built Mosque constructed by the USA *Jama'at*. It was inaugurated in 1964 and has a rich history based on the many sincere and devoted African-American Ahmadis who live nearby.

Upon arrival at the Mosque we saw that once again there were hundreds of Ahmadis there to greet Hazoor. The *'naaray'* were extremely loud and passionate and as I looked around I saw many people with tears streaming down their faces.

The Mosque had recently been renovated and extended, so *Hazoor-Aqdas* inspected the changes. Despite the fact that it was late evening and Hazoor had been either working or travelling all day, Hazoor did not show any form of tiredness.

It was becoming quite clear to me that Hazoor's true objective for the tour was to meet with Ahmadis, to help them and to show love to them. Our *Khalifa* was there only to give.

Even though it was late and we still had to travel for another couple of hours to our final destination, *Hazoor-Aqdas* waited with the local *Jama'at* for *Namaz* time, which was at 9.15pm, rather than proceed and offer prayers at the final destination.

The local Dayton *Jama'at* had organised a small tea reception and as I looked around the room and as I spoke to some of the locals I could feel and sense the elation in their hearts. It truly seemed that in a matter of minutes in the company of the *Khalifa*, the hearts and minds of the local Ahmadis were being cleansed and spiritualised.

Even upon completion of the *Maghrib* and *Isha* prayers, Hazoor did not leave immediately but stood for pictures with the local *Jama'at* and then distributed chocolates to the children present.

Despite being the youngest member of staff travelling from London, by that time I was feeling somewhat exhausted. I make that admission with a sense of shame because when I looked at Hazoor, whether he felt tired or not I could not tell, he never once showed it. His patience and generosity of spirit was something that I had seen for many years but in the few days of the tour I was seeing to an even greater degree.

Arrival in Columbus

We left around 9.45pm or 10pm and were assured by the local *Jama'at* that we would reach our final destination in Columbus, Ohio within an hour and a half but in reality it took us longer and we did not arrive until midnight.

Upon our eventual arrival I looked around at all the *Qafila* members and I could see that I was not the only who was tired, but all of the other members also looked exhausted and hungry. I felt particularly for the older members of our party.

Most of all, I thought of beloved Hazoor. For he had been working or travelling the entire day and would now have dinner and then rest very little before waking for *Tahajjud* so that he could pray for the *Jama'at*. I could not help but feel emotional, thinking once again about how Hazoor has given his life to serving the *Jama'at* of

the Promised Messiah[as]. I prayed that Allah grant him strength because the burden placed upon him surely could only be lifted with God's Special Help.

By the time we ate dinner it was 12.45am and *Fajr Namaz* was just a few hours away. Hazoor was staying at the home of Dr Abdul Salam Malik Sahib and after having dinner I felt like just lying down in the garage, however I was told that I would be staying at a home nearby.

A couple of other members of the *Qafila* were also going to be staying there and one of them remarked to me with concern that everything is far away, what if the place we are staying is an hour away! He said that by the time we get there, we would have to start getting ready for *Fajr*! I have to admit that I shared his concerns! However, *Alhamdolillah* the home we were staying at was only ten minutes away and so as soon as we got there we all went to our rooms.

I can only speak for myself, but I know that as soon as I lay my head on my pillow, within moments I was sound asleep!

Inspection of Bait-un-Nasir Mosque and Mulaqats

The next day, on 19th June, the vast majority of the day was spent at the Bait-un-Nasir Mosque in Columbus. This was the only Ahmadiyya Mosque to be inaugurated in the United States during the *Khilafat* Centenary year of 2008. It was situated on a large plot of land and was very beautiful.

Upon arrival, Hazoor conducted a brief inspection of the premises before going to his office to start *Mulaqats.* When he went inside there were no families waiting to see Hazoor and I could see that the Private Secretary and Security were fast becoming concerned at the lack of preparation. I could understand their concern because *Hazoor-Aqdas* was in his office and his precious time was being wasted.

Alhamdolillah soon the local *Jama'at* managed to arrange the families and the *Mulaqats* began. The majority of people waiting were asked to sit in a large hall. On one side were men and on the other side of a partition were women and children.

Meeting with young Ahmadis in Columbus

I took out my laptop and started to do some work but quite often local Ahmadis of different ages would come up to me and start talking. I soon realised that due to their love of *Khilafat* they were keen to talk to me about Hazoor and the *Jama'at.*

Some of their questions were quite straightforward such as asking me what work I did. Others asked questions that were harder to answer. For example some used to ask me what Hazoor's opinion of the United States was, whilst others would question me about Hazoor's daily routine or his views on various issues. To such questions I used to reply that '*If you really want to know the answer to this then you should ask Hazoor yourself!*'

Some of the younger generation would often ask me my personal feelings about how it felt to work and live close to the *Khalifa.* I explained that being close to the *Khalifa* was truly priceless. I said that no worldly rewards or work could ever compare. I told them Hazoor's love and warmth was such that it instilled a feeling of unparalleled happiness and contentment.

In terms of working with Hazoor, I said that Hazoor was very loving and forgiving. I had made many mistakes over the years. Never had Hazoor reprimanded me in a harsh or severe manner. Instead Hazoor would always guide me with a smile and with an affectionate tone.

I also spoke of how even though Hazoor was so busy, he still gave guidance to every department every step of the way. I said that I had seen so many times that if a person followed his direction and guidance it always led to success, but wherever a person thought they could do something on their own it invariably led to

mistakes.

I gave an example of Hazoor's wisdom which I had witnessed myself. I said that some time ago I had informed Hazoor that a council in the UK had made a policy that they would allow Muslim students to delay their examinations during Ramadan because it would be difficult for them to sit exams whilst fasting. I said that at the time I thought Hazoor would be pleased to hear this story but on the contrary Hazoor immediately said that this was a wrong policy that needed responding to.

Hazoor said that such a policy gave the impression that Muslims wanted preferential treatment and also it gave the impression that young children were forced to fast during Ramadan. Therefore it could give the impression that, God forbid, Islam was a cruel religion.

Hazoor dictated a letter and told me to send it to the Daily Mail who had printed the original article. As one of the most read newspapers in the UK getting a letter published is very difficult. But within half an hour of sending the letter by email I received a call from the Daily Mail saying they were so impressed by the letter that they wished to publish it as their '*Letter of the Day*' and then a few days later I received a gift from them in recognition that it was now considered '*Letter of the Week*'.

Based on my experiences I told the young Ahmadis that the key to success was to follow Hazoor's guidance no matter what. There could be times when Hazoor's decision was different to what you had hoped, but as soon as his guidance was received it ought to be accepted with full confidence and contentment.

From their part I found the Ahmadi youth in America to hold very mature and loving feelings towards *Khilafat*. Often, I would speak to children who were eleven or twelve or young teenagers and the way they would speak about *Khilafat* was genuinely astonishing, especially given that many of them had never met Hazoor personally and had only seen him on MTA.

For example one boy said to me that he felt so lucky to be born in an era where there was *true Khilafat* to guide him, particularly considering that for 1300 years the world did not have this blessing.

Another boy said that the unity of the *Jama'at* under *Khilafat* was something he truly appreciated when he saw how divided other groups were.

One boy, who had a *Mulaqat* later in the day, said he had never met Hazoor before but he already knew that when he met him, it would inspire him to be a better person and to spread the message of Ahmadiyyat to the corners of the earth.

Another boy spoke of the 'light' of Khilafat and that it was an institution that was incomparable to all else. He said '*How can I describe Khilafat when it is truly unique?*'

These were just a few of the comments of some of the young *Atfal* and *Khuddam* I met whilst in America. The way they talked about *Khilafat* was a further sign in favour of the truth of Ahmadiyyat. Such love could only be instilled by Allah in people so young.

An Example of True Love for Khilafat

One person I met in Columbus had travelled with his family from Detroit to meet with Hazoor. Detroit was around 3 hours drive and so they had left very early in the morning. He had been told that his name was on the list of *Mulaqats* but upon arrival he was suddenly told that his name was no longer on the list. Nevertheless he was advised that he and his family could wait if they wished in case later in the day there was a space.

After narrating the situation he said that he hoped and prayed that he would get the chance to meet Hazoor. However there was no bitterness or anger that he and his family had travelled and now they were being told that

they could not meet Hazoor. I sat with him for around half an hour and we spoke about various things but every few minutes the talk would return to *Khilafat*.

At the end of our talk I prayed that he would get the chance to meet Hazoor but as the day passed the chances looked less and less likely. Finally at around 9pm he was told that as it was getting close to Maghreb and I*sha* time he would not be able to meet with Hazoor. I felt so sorry for him as I could see the disappointment on his face. But again he did not say anything to protest or display any anger.

I prayed again that somehow he be able to meet Hazoor and I am sure that he too was praying for this. Suddenly an announcement came that those who had been left waiting would not be able to meet Hazoor in the office but they could line up and do *Musafa* as Hazoor left for *Namaz*. My heart was filled with joy and so I immediately made sure that the person knew and was ready. Thus when Hazoor emerged from his office my friend was able to do *Musafah* and the look of joy on his face was something that filled my heart with happiness.

To the outside world it would have been seemed strange that after waiting all day in the heat, why a person could be so happy after a brief handshake. But not to Ahmadis. For he just wanted to have the opportunity to see Hazoor from close up and to touch his blessed hand. When he was able to do this, you could see that in an instant he had been consumed with contentment and satisfaction, *Masha'Allah.*

Departure From Ohio and Visit to Pittsburgh

On 20th June 2012 we left Ohio and embarked on the next part of the tour.

It was a day that I was looking forward to a lot as we were travelling to the *Jama'at* Headquarters at Baitur Rahman in Maryland. I had visited USA on a few occasions over the past couple of years for *Jama'at* conferences and so I had visited Baitur Rahman on a number of occasions. Relatively speaking, Baitur Rahman felt like a home within the USA for me!

Before reaching Maryland we had one major stop to make and that was to the Nur Mosque in Pittsburgh which was around three hours drive from Columbus.

Before arriving at the Nur Mosque, *Hazoor-Aqdas* and the *Qafila* stopped for a few minutes at a cemetery in Pittsburgh where a number of distinguished Ahmadis had been buried.

Hazoor prayed at the grave of Mirza Munawar Ahmad Sahib, who was an Ahmadi Missionary posted to Pittsburgh in the 1940s and who had passed away in the city after developing an illness.

Speaking to local *Jama'at* members I found that they had a great sense of appreciation in their hearts for Mirza Munawar Ahmad Sahib and for the sacrifices he made for the sake of the local *Jama'at*. Even people who had been born well after his passing spoke with great reverence about him.

Hearing the stories reminded me that a person who is righteous and who sincerely serves Allah's *Jama'at* is never forgotten and this is one of the real beauties of our Ahmadiyya *Jama'at.*

The graveyard was the most beautifully designed graveyard I had ever seen. It had small rolling hills, pure green grass and had been very well maintained.

We returned to the car after a few minutes to proceed to the Mosque.

Throughout the tour Sakawat Bajwa Sahib and Bashir Sahib sat in the same car as me, whilst in the USA our driver was a *Khadim* by the name of Waqas Sahib.

I am relatively quiet but I used to very much enjoy the car conversations. Sakawat Sahib would keep us entertained with jokes and stories, whilst Bashir Sahib would tell us interesting facts or comment upon the latest news stories.

As we left the cemetery that day Bashir Sahib informed us that in America you could only rent graves for a period of time and then families would have to pay more money to rent them for a further period.

I was quite shocked to hear this and so without thinking I commented that: '*In America nobody is allowed to rest in peace!*' Hearing this Bashir Sahib, Sakawat Sahib and Waqas Sahib started laughing a lot and found it a very funny comment. I was left feeling happy that in the tour I had managed to make at least one joke, even though my comment had initially been made in all seriousness!

We arrived at the Nur Mosque in Pittsburgh at around 2pm. Once again there were hundreds of Ahmadis to welcome Hazoor. Normally on such occasions I try to stand close to *Hazoor-Aqdas* so that if he gives any particular direction to the local *Jama'at* then I can note it down. However on this one occasion my mind was elsewhere.

The reason being was that a few hours earlier, we had stopped at a petrol station for a few minutes. The temperature was extremely hot and suffocating and so when *Sadr Sahib Khuddamul Ahmadiyya*, Rizwan Al-ladin, offered me and Waqas *bhai* a smoothie we could not reject. I took the smoothie, which was very large, back to the car and within a few minutes I had drank the entire cup. And so by the time we arrived at the Mosque I was desperate to use the bathroom! Truly the last hour or so of the journey had been extremely difficult!

Therefore on this one occasion, rather than make notes I ran and asked a local *Khadim* if he could show me where the bathroom was which he kindly did.

Afterwards I narrated the story to Waqas *bhai* and he said that when travelling in a *Qafila* you should never drink a large cup quickly otherwise you are bound to face difficulty, rather you should take a sip or two every half an hour. It was good advice and something I followed for the rest of the tour and in all seriousness I learnt a good lesson on that day!

After *Zuhr* and *Asr* prayers and lunch, Hazoor met with the local Ahmadis in *Mulaqat*. Many of them were African-American and as they left Hazoor's office one by one their faces were gleaming with joy.

As we witnessed those scenes, the local President of the *Jama'at,* Omar Shaheed Sahib, also an African-American, said to me that he had no doubt that even though Hazoor's visit to Pittsburgh was only for a couple of hours it would lead to an everlasting change in the *Jama'at* and would be a means of spiritually charging all of the Ahmadis, *Insha'Allah.*

Arrival at Baitur Rahman, Maryland

We arrived at Baitur Rahman at 9pm and it was one of the most electrifying moments of the entire tour. There were around 2,000 Ahmadis there to welcome *Hazoor-Aqdas* and the love and passion which they displayed was something I will not forget.

The *na'ray* (slogans) were not just loud but were heartfelt; the tears were not manufactured but were pure bursts of emotion and the beauty of the *Nazms* were not just in the melodious tunes but because those who recited them meant every single word.

When I saw this welcome it occurred to me that whilst Hazoor had been in the USA for four days, many of the Ahmadis could not believe it until they had seen it with their own eyes. Upon finally seeing that the *Khalifa* really was amongst them released such a loving and emotional reaction.

It was only the second tour of the United States made by *Hazoor-Aqdas* since he became *Khalifa* in 2003 and it was clear that the local Ahmadis held a desperate longing for their beloved Imam to be amongst them.

After a break for twenty minutes, *Hazoor-Aqdas* came to the Mosque to lead the *Maghrib* and *Isha* prayers. The Mosque and its surrounding halls were packed. Throughout *Namaz* I felt extremely hot and was sweating a great deal. I kept thinking perhaps it was only me who felt so hot but then as *Namaz* ended I saw the faces of the other Ahmadis nearby and all were fanning themselves or wiping sweat away from their foreheads.

It turned out that there was a problem with the AC. Given the warm temperature and the fact that the Mosque was packed, the temperature inside the Mosque had become extremely hot. The problems with the AC lasted a couple of days and during that time I used to think of *Hazoor-Aqdas* wearing a *Paghri* and *Achkan* and how hot he must feel. Thankfully the problem was resolved after a couple of days just in time for *Jumu'ah.*

There are a number of different houses and properties on the Baitur Rahman site and so after dinner, I was shown to the room where I was staying. It was at the home of Mukhtar Malhi Sahib and was the same house where *Hazoor-Aqdas* stayed during his visit in 2008. Abdul Majid Tahir Sahib was also staying in the house as well as many members of the USA *Jama'at.*

Before going to sleep I asked Mukthar Sahib what time *Fajr* was and he replied 4.40am and so I set my alarm accordingly and went to sleep. Sometime later I woke up myself and checked the clock and it was 5am! My alarm had either not worked or I had slept through it. I jumped up and did *Wudhu* but by the time I was ready I saw that people had started coming back from the Mosque already and that I had missed *Fajr*. And so I offered *Fajr Salat* in my room on my own. But for the rest of the day I felt very guilty and upset, that whilst I was fortunate enough to accompany *Hazoor-Aqdas*, yet I had not woken up on time for *Fajr*. I resolved to make sure that it would not happen again and so for the rest of the tour I set a number of alarms to make sure I was up in good time and *Masha'Allah* I did not have this problem again.

Programmes at Baitur Rahman

After arriving at Baitur Rahman late on 20th June, we stayed for just over a week until 28th June. For the first time on the tour there was not much travelling for a few days at least. In fact the only time we left the Baitur Rahman complex during the entire week was on the 27th when *Hazoor-Aqdas* went to address a function arranged at Capitol Hill in Washington DC.

One thing being in Hazoor's *Qafila* certainly teaches is self-discipline. During that week many friends and relatives often invited me to visit them or encouraged me to go shopping or do some tourist activities. They would say that there must be some free time. I cannot deny that on a couple of occasions I was tempted and thought for a few moments that *'I am personally free for couple of hours now so perhaps I could go out and see some of the local area or visit a friend'.*

But whenever such thoughts entered my mind I used to remind myself that I was part of Hazoor's entourage and was not there for pleasure but for work. If I had sought permission to leave the premises for an hour or two, I probably would have gained it but I knew that in my heart that I would feel anxious and restless at having left my duty.

Whilst those thoughts did enter my mind in the first few days, over the course of the tour they became less and less. Indeed by the end of the tour I had no desire to go out on any personal activity, my genuine desire was to stay with the *Qafila* at all times.

In this respect I did feel that I was able to develop a self-discipline which was another blessing of travelling with the *Khalifa, Alhamdolillah.*

I can also say that I never once saw any of the other staff and security members who travelled with *Hazoor-Aqdas* from London display any frustration or desire to visit family or to see the local cities.

The fact that we were remaining on the Baitur Rahman complex for the vast majority of our stay in Maryland did not mean that there was not much activity taking place, in fact quite the contrary.

The schedule of *Hazoor-Aqdas* each day was completely full. From morning until evening each day Hazoor's schedule would involve meeting countless Ahmadi families in *Mulaqat*; various *Amila* meetings took place; classes with *Waqf-e-Nau* and *Waqfat-e-Nau*; classes with Ahmadi male and female students and hundreds of children were able to do their *Aameens* with *Hazoor-Aqdas*. These were just a few of the many internal programmes during that week.

Furthermore, a number of non-Ahmadi dignitaries visited the Mosque to meet Hazoor during the course of the week.

Hazoor-Aqdas also used to receive countless letters, both personal and official, each day which he used to read and reply to.

I myself used to send official letters to Hazoor almost every day in which I would request his guidance or approval for various things related to my work. Each letter would return the next day or in some instances the very same day. Sometimes *Hazoor-Aqdas* would tick and sign the letters to acknowledge that he had read them and to approve whatever I had submitted, whilst on some came handwritten notes and instructions. The same process was undertaken for all other letters that Hazoor received.

Many of us who were present used to sit in genuine astonishment at how one man could undertake so much work. With absolute conviction I can say that no other man could fulfil such intense and relentless schedules. I say that not just as an Ahmadi who loves the *Khalifa*, but objectively speaking, I have no doubt in my mind that the amount of time and energy *Hazoor-Aqdas* devotes for his *Jama'at* will not be equalled by any other person, in any organisation throughout the world.

Of course *Hazoor-Aqdas* is a human being but it is due to Allah's support that he is able to sustain such relentless levels of work. The other reason I believe that *Hazur-Aqdas* is able to sustain such high levels of work is because of his unparalleled love for the *Jama'at*. Meeting hundreds of Ahmadis daily, reading their letters, giving them guidance is not just a duty but something that the *Khalifa* enjoys due to his consummate love for the *Jama'at*. He is truly selfless, whereby his happiness comes from the happiness of others. The *Khalifa* feels the joy of his fellow Ahmadis as though it was his own joy and conversely feels the pain of his fellow Ahmadis as though it was his pain.

On a personal level I was pleased when my wife arrived at Baitur Rahman on 25th June with her parents. For the next couple of days they would come in the evenings at *Maghrib* and *Isha* time. After *Namaz* I would bring two plates of food to a bench just outside the Mosque and we would both sit and eat our evening meal together. During those few minutes I would tell her about the events of that day or previous days on the tour.

I would often mention the Ahmadis who came for *Mulaqat* and their feelings of joy after meeting with Hazoor. I shared with her how on a daily basis I would see dozens of grown men and women with tears rolling down their faces, unable to control their emotions after meeting with Hazoor.

An Example of the Love of Ahmadis for Khilafat

There is little doubt that every Ahmadi in the USA would have loved to have the opportunity to meet with Hazoor personally in *Mulaqat* during the tour. However due to time constraints some people were unable to meet him and certainly the disappointment they felt was natural. Nevertheless, all such people who I met never displayed any anger or resentment.

One such person, Naveed Malik described to me how he felt after learning that he would not have the

opportunity to meet Hazoor personally and how he reacted. He said:

"Weeks after receiving approval, and the day prior to Mulaqat, I received a call from Markaz saying that since I had met Hazoor-e-Anwar (aba) last year, I would not have Mulaqat tomorrow. Undoubtedly my wife and I were disappointed, but we quickly concluded that the true blessing was the many opportunities we availed to pray behind Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih (aba). We were in Hazoor's (aba) sublime presence for nearly two weeks, and this strengthened our weak hearts. It gave us focus. It inspired us.

My entire family has been regularly offering their five daily prayers separately since Hazoor's admonition, my wife has accelerated her study and hifz of the Holy Quran, my sister has begun wearing hijab, and Ahmadis in and near Zion have reawakened to their Tabligh duties. Alhamdulillah. Hazoor's visit has changed our lives, and it is as if Hazoor-e-Anwar (aba) continues to bless us with his presence in America."

Friday Sermon at Baitur Rahman

Another historic aspect of this tour occurred on 22 June 2012 when *Hazoor-Aqdas* delivered the Friday Sermon at Baitur Rahman. This was the first time Hazoor had delivered a Sermon from the USA National *Jama'at* Headquarters.

Each week Ahmadis across the world watch Hazoor's Friday Sermon on MTA or on the internet and so wherever the Sermon is being delivered from becomes the focal point for the entire worldwide *Jama'at*.

The American Ahmadis had watched for many years Hazoor's sermons in various other countries and so the sense of pride and honour they felt was quite apparent that the eyes of the Ahmadi world would be on *their* national Mosque and that they would be the ones who were sitting directly in front of *Hazoor-Aqdas*, whilst the rest of the world watched from afar.

Hazoor's Sermon focused on the importance of *Salat*. This was a subject that Hazoor had spoken about at length on countless occasions throughout the world. Listening to Hazoor's words reinforced to me the fundamental nature of *Namaz* and how it did not matter what part of the world Ahmadis were living in, this was the number one priority that our *Khalifa* wanted us to focus on.

Interview with Dan Merica CNN

On 22 June 2012 a few hours after *Jumu'ah* Prayers, Hazoor-Aqdas met with Dan Merica a well-respected journalist working for CNN.

Just before Hazoor arrived in the room I had the opportunity to speak to the journalist. I often find that some dignitaries or journalists who come to meet Hazoor do not have a proper understanding of the importance of *Khilafat* and what the *Khalifa* means to all Ahmadis.

Consequently in those few minutes I tried to convey to Dan Merica what *Khilafat* really was. I said our *Jama'at* could claim to be the only truly united organisation in the world because there was no other organisation or religion that truly believed in one leader and was willing to follow whatever he said.

Khilafat, I said, was not a dictatorship because we willingly obeyed and accepted the *Khalifa*. We did this because of our belief that he is Allah's representative on earth, chosen by Allah to continue the mission of the Promised Messiah[as].

Sometimes when giving such briefings to journalists it appears to go over their heads or they do not seem to comprehend the love and attachment the *Jama'at* feels to the *Khalifa*. But on this particular occasion I did feel that the journalist was both surprised and impressed by the love Ahmadis held for the institution of *Khilafat*.

After a few minutes *Hazoor-Aqdas* arrived and the interview commenced in English and lasted for around

20 minutes.

The journalist asked a range of questions and particularly the objectives underlying Hazoor's visit. Hazoor said that the major purpose was to meet with Ahmadis living in the USA and to guide them. He said he would meet them both individually but also address them collectively at the *Jalsa Salana*.

The journalist brought up Hazoor's impending visit to Capitol Hill and asked how important it was to Hazoor. I could he was astonished by Hazoor's answer, because Hazoor said simply it was not his priority – his priority remained meeting the Ahmadis.

Nonetheless, Hazoor did say that the Capitol Hill function was important to the extent that it was a good platform for the *Jama'at* to build contacts and for him to present the peaceful teachings of Islam to the leaders of the United States.

Publication of interview on CNN website

After the interview, the local USA *Jama'at* assured us that the journalist would write up a story and place it on the CNN website within the next couple of days.

However this was not the case and as the days passed I began to think that it was becoming increasingly unlikely that he would write an article about the interview. I personally was becoming increasingly disappointed.

My disappointment was thankfully misplaced as ultimately he did write up a story that was published on the CNN website on 7th July 2012, a few days after Hazoor had left the USA and continued his tour in Canada.

The article appeared on the front page of the CNN website with a large picture of Hazoor and therefore was immediately accessible and visible to the hundreds of thousands of people who check the CNN website daily.

The article also commented on Hazoor's address to Capitol Hill on 27 June which the journalist had also covered.

In the article Dan Merica had written the headline was:

'Islamic Sect has appealing message for US politicians but has global enemies'

Merica went onto write in his article:

"You've almost certainly never heard of him, but Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad drew some serious star power at a recent Capitol Hill reception in his honour...

House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and Republican Sen. John Cornyn were among the many law-makers who showed up to meet Ahmad, a Muslim leader who was in town last week on a rare U.S. visit from London.

At a time when the United States is struggling with its views about Islam – as Islamists gain power in the Middle East and with on-going concerns about Quran-citing terrorists – it's not hard to see Ahmad's appeal to both parties. As he said in his Capitol Hill speech, he has "love for all, hatred for none."

It's a sentiment that Sen. Robert Casey, Democrat of Pennsylvania, echoed in introducing Ahmad, praising the "leadership you have shown to tolerance and to peace."

It's not just Ahmad who espouses his can't-we-all-get-along read on Islam. The 61-year-old is the spiritual leader of the global Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, whose friendliness toward the West and whose criticism of other Muslims has earned the sect allies at the highest level of the U.S government, even as it faces mortal enemies in other parts of the world...

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, who leads an international Ahmadi community is the sect's fifth Khalifa, or leader.

The group claims tens of millions of followers around the world, but outside experts say the number is smaller, in the millions.

For Ahmad and his followers, their relatively small sect is the real face of Islam, which has more than a billion followers around the world.

"It is time that we, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, should give the real and true picture of Islam," Ahmad said in an interview inside the Silver Spring mosque. "I will always be talking about peace. That peace is not from myself or some new teaching but it is the true, real teaching which I gather and get from the Holy Qur'an."

"Nowadays, Islam is being targeted only because of so-called Muslim groups who claim themselves to be Muslims but are not following the true teachings of Islam," Ahmad said, speaking of what he calls "fundamentalists Muslims."

"If it is that Islam that is being portrayed by those orthodox Muslims, then I don't think there is any chance in spreading Islam."

Meetings with Other Dignitaries

During the course of the week at Baitur Rahman, *Hazoor-Aqdas* met with a number of other dignitaries. This included Daniel Ohene Agyekum, Ghana's Ambassador to the USA. The ambassador seemed truly delighted to visit Hazoor at Baitur Rahman and the meeting was very friendly and warm. Both Hazoor and the Ambassador shared memories of Ghana and the Ambassador was struck by how much Hazoor knew about Ghana.

Another meeting was with Alejandro Beutel, who was a young Muslim, who worked for MPAC, which is a national group representing Muslims in the USA. I and a few others met with him before and after Hazoor met with him and he was very confident, to the point of perhaps being even a little over-confident. But when Hazoor entered his attitude was very different and you could see in his eyes that he was awestruck by Hazoor's presence. Indeed he admitted as much after Hazoor had departed the meeting.

Hazoor was also visited by Tim Lenderking, the Director of Pakistan Affairs at the United States State Department. This was a very sober and detailed discussion in which Mr Lenderking spoke about his contact with Pakistani officials and asked Hazoor how the USA could assist Ahmadis.

Hazoor-Aqdas spoke in detail about the difficulties faced by Ahmadis in Pakistan and the lack of peace they had in their daily lives. He further talked about the need for Ahmadis to be granted voting rights that were free and not based on them having to, God forbid, class themselves as either non-Muslim on the one hand or on the other hand to disassociate themselves from the Promised Messiah[as].

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HADITH

Hadhrat Wathilah ibn Asqa'i[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said: "Allah, the Blessed and Exalted says, 'I reveal Myself to a person as he perceives Me. (My treatment of a person is according to his perception of Me.) So, let him perceive about Me what pleases him.' "

(Bukhari kitabuttauhid bab yahdharakumullah nafsih, Musnad Darmi fi bab husnazzan billah)

THE HOLY PROPHET'S[saw] QUALITY OF FORGIVENESS

Khaula Rehman Shah

The world has never seen a man except the Holy Prophet[saw], who in weakness and power remained humble and forgiving towards even his staunch enemies. Although he had power and means to take revenge of those unbearable sufferings, they inflicted on him and his followers, yet he forgave all of them.

In the Holy Qur'an Allah says to the Prophet Muhammad[saw],

وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ اِلاَّ رَحْمَةً لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ 0

'We have sent you as a mercy and blessing for mankind.' (21:108)

Indeed he was a perfect picture of this verse.

Before his ministry, Muhammad[saw] was trusted, respected and liked by the people of Mecca. He was given the title of "the Trusty" and "the True." Once he declared his Prophethood, all Meccans turned against him. They considered him an enemy of their elders and their traditions. They isolated him and deprived him, even of basic human needs, such as food and shelter. He was beaten, mocked and ridiculed. He was threatened with murder and had to leave his home. While walking in the streets of Mecca, women would dump garbage on him and children would throw stones at him. But he was never angry. A woman used to throw garbage on him regularly, once he passed in front of the house and no one threw garbage on him, he went inside to ask for the woman, if she was alright. On that day she was sick and he was there to console her. Such was the degree of his patience and benevolence.

What troubles he did not encounter and which atrocities he was spared from? But, he endured all these with great patience and forgiveness and displayed such a high character that it seems impossible for anyone to replicate. There are numerous incidents which highlight his endurance and forgiveness.

Once when the Holy Prophet[saw] was offering his prayers near the *Kabah*, Uqbah bin Abi Muiṭ stood up in rage and began to strangle the Prophet with a cloth until he began to choke. When Ḥaḍhrat Abu Bakr[ra] was informed of this, he came running and saved the Holy Prophet[saw].

Once, the Holy Prophet[saw] was walking on his way, when an ill-behaved person publicly threw filth upon the head of the Holy Prophet[saw]. The Holy Prophet[saw] returned home in this state, and when one of his daughters saw this, she quickly fetched some water, washed his head, and began to weep bitterly. The Holy Prophet[saw] calmed her and said, *"Daughter, weep not, for Allah Himself will protect your father and all of these difficulties shall pass."*

Then, at another instance, the Holy Prophet[saw] was in prostration before God the Almighty, in the courtyard of the *Ka'bah*, where a few Chieftains of the Quraish were gathered as well. Abu Jahl said, *"At this time, if someone can muster the courage, throw the womb of a camel upon Muḥammad."* Hence, Uqbah bin Abi Muiṭ stood up and threw the uterus of a slaughtered camel, full of blood and filth, upon the back of the Holy Prophet[saw], and all of them burst into laughter. When Hadhrat Fatima[ra] learnt of this, she came running and removed this burden from her father's shoulders. It was only then, that the Holy Prophet[saw] was able to lift his head from prostration.

In Khaiber, a Jewish woman named Zainab[ra] tried to poison the Prophet but he[saw] refused to take revenge.

In another instance, Gaurath bin Harith grabbed the sword of the Holy Prophet[saw] in order to kill him whilst the Holy Prophet[saw] was sleeping. When the Holy Prophet[saw] woke up, Gaurath said , "Ya Muhammed! Who will save you from me?" The Holy Prophet[saw] calmly replied, "Allah." This had such an effect on Gaurath that he started to tremble and dropped the sword. The Holy Prophet[saw] picked up the sword and said, "Who will now save you from me?" Gaurath fell at the feet of the Holy Prophet[saw] and pleaded to be

forgiven. The Holy Prophet[saw] set him free.

Even such severe persecution could not stop Hadhrat Muhammad[saw] from spreading Islam. The Quraish were furious. They decided to cut all relations with the Holy Prophet[saw] and all the members of the Banu Hashim and Banu Muṭṭalib, the Holy Prophet's[saw] family. An agreement was drafted, "No individual shall marry any member of the Banu Hashim or Banu Muṭṭalib. No one will sell anything to them or purchase anything from them, and no food or drink will reach them." The only way out for them was that if they separate themselves from the Holy Prophet[saw] and hand him over to them. This agreement was formally written and signed by the main chieftains of the Quraish and hung on the wall of the *Ka'bah*, in the form of a significant national testament. Hence, the Holy Prophet[saw] and all of the Banu Hashim and Banu Muṭṭalib, whether Muslim or disbelievers, were besieged in a mountainous valley, called the "*Shaibe Abu Ṭalib*"(the valley of Abu Talib). The difficulties and hardships that the Holy Prophet[saw] and people of these tribes went through cannot be mentioned in words. Companions of the Holy Prophet[saw] narrate that sometimes they survived by eating the leaves of wild trees, when nothing else was available. Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas states that once, during the night, his foot fell upon something that seemed to be moist and soft, perhaps, it was a piece of a date. At that time, he was in such a state of hunger that he immediately picked it up and swallowed it. He states that until this day I do not know what that thing was. As far as the children were concerned, the sounds of their crying and screaming could be heard outside the encampment, and this would please the Quraish. This boycott continued for two and a half to three years.

A few days after the ban was lifted, the Holy Prophet[saw] decided to go to an adjacent town of Ta'if, to deliver the message of God. The people of that town were very unjust. They threw stones at him and injured him. Blood was dripping from his wounds and was collecting in his shoes. Sun was hot and there was no shelter. The merciless people ran him out of town. He found a tree and sat under its shade to take a breath. Imagine the plight of a person who had been persecuted all day, famished, hungry, thirsty and unprotected, sitting exposed under a palm tree. Did he seek revenge? Did he pray to Allah to destroy the city of Ta'if? No, not at all! Instead, the Holy Prophet[saw] raised his hands towards heaven and prayed:

"O Lord, I make my complaint to Thee out of my feebleness. I am insignificant in the eyes of men. O Thou Most Merciful! Lord of the weak! Thou art my Lord! Do not forsake me! Leave me not a prey to strangers nor to my enemies! If Thou art not offended, I am safe. I seek refuge in the Light of Thy countenance, by which all darkness is dispelled and peace comes here and hereafter. Let not Thy anger descend on me! Solve my problems as it pleases Thee. There is no power, no help but in Thee." (Hisham and Tabari)

At that moment an angel appeared to him and offered to punish those dark hearted people, by crushing them between two mountains, surrounding the city. But, Muhammad[saw] refused. He prayed for those people and said that I have faith that many of these people will accept the message of Islam. The Holy Prophet[saw] was surely a reflection of mercy and forgiveness.

Even after the Holy Prophet[saw] migrated to Medina the Meccans did not leave him alone and the Prophet had to fight several battles in self defense. After Eight years of fighting and bloodshed, the city of Mecca fell to Muslims and the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] entered the city in glory and victory. Meccans were running scared of their lives. As was the tradition in those days, the victorious armies would kill their opponents and take their women and wealth. This great Prophet[saw] of God, on the other hand, entered the fallen city, riding on the back of a camel, his head bent so low that it was touching the seat. He was reciting the praise of God. Meccans were anxiously awaiting their fate. Muhammad[saw] spoke to the people of Mecca, the same people who persecuted him for years, who killed many of his friends, who beat him and abused him, who wanted to kill him, because of which he had to leave the city of his birth. On that day, if Muhammad[saw] wanted, he could have settled all those scores. He had the power of life and death over them. But this Prophet[saw] of God spoke to those people and said, "This day, there is no fear upon you. Everyone's life and property is protected. Those who would not fight will be given shelter." He even honored their leaders and the city of Mecca was taken without any bloodshed or any killing. No revenge

or punishment was imposed. The world had never seen this type of graciousness before. No wonder that within days, the entire Arabia submitted before the will of God, and accepted Islam. The Prophet (saw) surely was a mercy for mankind.

The Holy Prophet's[saw] magnanimity at the time of Fall of Mecca, has continued to bewilder, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Reverend Benjamin Bosworth Smith (1784-1884) was an American Protestant Episcopal bishop, he wrote:

"Now would have been the moment to gratify his ambition, to satiate his lust, to get his revenge. Read the account of Muhammad's entry into Mecca along with the account of Marius Sulla as he entered Rome, one would be in a position to recognize the magnanimity and moderation of the Prophet of Arabia. There were no proscription lists, no plunder, no wanton revenge. From a helpless orphan to the ruler of a big country was a great transition; yet the Holy Prophet retained the nobility of his character under all circumstances." (R. Bosworth Smith in Muhammad and Muhammadism)

Stanley Lane-Poole (1854 – 1931) was a British orientalist and archaeologist, he wrote:

"But what is this? Is there no blood in the streets? Where are the bodies of the thousands that have been butchered? Facts are hard things; and it is a fact that the day of Muhammad's greatest triumph over his enemies was also the day of his grandest victory over himself. He freely forgave the Kureysh all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn they had inflicted on him; he gave an amnesty to the whole population of Makkah. Four criminals whom justice condemned, made up Muhammad's proscription list; no house was robbed, no woman insulted. It was thus that Muhammad entered again his native city. Through all the annals of conquest, there is no triumphant entry like unto this one". (Lane Poole, quoted in Introduction to Higgins' Apology for Mohammad pp ixxi)

The following description of his person and character is taken from Sir William Muir:

"In the exercise of a power absolutely dictatorial, Muhammad was just and temperate. Nor was he wanting in moderation towards his enemies, when once they had cheerfully submitted to his claims. The long and obstinate struggle against his pretentions maintained by the inhabitants of Makkah might have induced its conqueror to mark his indignation in indelible traces of fire and blood. But Muhammad, excepting a few criminals, granted a universal pardon; and, nobly casting into oblivion the memory of the past, with all its mockery, its affronts and persecution, he treated even the foremost of his opponents with a gracious and even friendly consideration. Not less marked was the forbearance shown to Abdullah and the disaffected citizens of Madinah, who for so many years persistently thwarted his designs and resisted his authority, nor the clemency with which he received submissive advances of tribes that before had been the most hostile, even in the hour of victory." (Life of Muhammad)

All these events draw the attention of any devout believer to the following verse of the Holy Quran:

"Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe, you also *should invoke blessings on him and salute* him *with the salutation of peace".* (Al Qur'an 33:57)

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HUMANITY FIRST NEEDS VOLUNTEERS AND FINANCIAL HELP

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THE NOBLE MESSENGER AND HIS PLEASURE IN PRAYER

Shahab Ahmad, Edmonton

The Holy Prophet[saw] said,

"The delight of my eyes is in prayer." (*Nasai*)

Allah was the sole interest of the Messenger.

God has created the *Jinn* and the men to worship Him, i.e., to interject the attributes of God within them:

And I have not created the *Jinn* and the men but that they may worship Me. (Chapter 51, V. 57)

And in order to accomplish this purpose, He has implanted in them a firm belief that there is a Being Who is their Creator and Nourisher, therefore they feel obliged to worship Him:

And when thy Lord brings forth from Adam's children - out of their loins – their offspring and makes them witness against their own selves by saying: 'Am I not your Lord? They say, 'Yea, we do bear witness.' This He does lest you should say on the day of Resurrection, 'We were surely unaware of this. (Chapter 7, V. 173)

Monotheism and idolatry are the two opposite poles, which cannot coexist. Monotheists have a natural abhorrence against idolatry. This natural tendency works in every person, but not to the same degree. Pious persons, especially the Prophets, excel others in this virtue. And the Holy Messenger Muhammad[saw]., being the Chief of all Prophets, was par excellence in this respect. It is a historical fact that right from his birth till his death he was an extreme lover of *Tauheed*, and hated idolatry. I quote some examples from his life:

Umme Aiman, the nurse of the Holy Messenger[saw], relates: An idol Bawana was highly esteemed by the Quresh, the tribe of the Messenger[saw]. Abu Talib, his uncle and guardian, and his maternal aunts used to offer sacrifice to this idol and offer prayer there for one day once a year. They wanted the Messenger to accompany them but he always refused, often at the at the cost of the displeasure of Abu Talib and the aunts. Once, compelled by the aunts, he went there but returned in a severe distraught condition because of a strange vision he saw. When asked the reason he answered that the moment he tried to reach the idol, a tall white person warned: Muhammad[saw], stay behind and do not touch this idol. (1)

Definitely it was a Divine Plan. God did not tolerate even the slightest stigma on him, whom He had decided to be the King of monotheists and the Chief of all Prophets.

In childhood he went to Syria with his uncle, Abu Talib, and met there a Christian monk, Bahira, who asked him about Laat and Uzza, the famous idols of the Meccans. The Holy Prophet[saw] replied: ask me not about them. By God, I do not hate anything more than them. A similar incident happened again in Syria when the Messenger[saw] went there as trade manager of Hadhrat Khadijah[ra] (1)

The Messenger[saw] never touched meat if the animal was sacrificed in the name of an idol, did not accept any gift from any infidel, and did not accept any help offered to him by an infidel even when faced with danger.

Hadhrat Ayesha[ra] relates that when the Holy Prophet was advancing for the Battle of Badr an infidel, famous for his courage and bravery, met him twice on his way and each time he offered his service to fight as a soldier in his army. The Holy Prophet[saw] refused to accept his service only because he was an infidel. The same man met him third time and declared: I believe in Allah and the Messenger, and repeated his request. Only then the Messenger accepted his service.(1)

This was about the Messenger's abhorrence against idolatry. Now coming to his love for *Tauheed* and prayers I say: The young Muhammad[saw] used to spend one month once a year in a cave, Hira, two to three miles north of Mecca, for prayers, which increased in frequency and duration with his age. He was disgusted with the animal-like life the Meccans were living. And his soul was perplexed with uncertainty as to what was the

right path to follow. Allah Himself describes the Messenger's concern about his people:

And He found thee wandering in search of Him and guided thee unto Himself. (Chapter 93, V.8) Considering verses 7-12 of this chapter the dictionary meaning of the word '*Zaal*' ,i.e. he erred and went astray cannot be applied here. Here the word, '*Zaal*' has not been used in disapprobation but in his praise, and actually means: And He found thee lost in the love of thy people, and provided thee with guidance for them. This interpretation is supported by the following verse of the Qur'an, which describes him to be immune to error or going astray:

Your companion has neither erred, nor has he gone astray. (Chapter 53, Verse 3)

It was Monday, the 24th of *Ramadhan*, and the Messenger was engaged in worship when the Angel Gabriel appeared and asked him to recite, to which he answered: I cannot recite. Gabriel again asked him to recite; again his answer was the same. Then Gabriel said: Recite in the name of your Lord Who created. (CH.96, V.2)

Then the Messenger immediately recited. The point to be emphasized here is the Messenger did not recite until his Lord's name was not uttered by Gabriel. Thus his mission (Islam) started in the name of his Beloved God.

God Himself describes the Messenger's[saw] prayer during the very early years of his ministry:

Surely, thy Lord knows that thou standest up praying for nearly two-thirds of the night, and sometimes half or a third thereof, (Ch.73, V.21.)

The Messenger's love for God was so evident in his prayers and deeds that even the Meccan disbelievers had to admit: Muhammad is lost in Love of his Lord.

There was a deep imprint of *Tauheed* on the Messenger's worship and deeds. He started his regular prayers with the following words:

I have turned my face toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth, being ever inclined to God, and I am not of those who associate gods with God. (Ch.6V.80)

Because of the fact that his prayers were free from any and every kind of hypocrisy, and had a deep imprint of *Tauheed* that God Himself asked him to announce:

Say, My Prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. ' He has no partner. And so I am commanded, and I am the first of those who submit. (Ch.6, Vv.163-64)

In addition to the five daily Prayers, he was very regular in offering very long and full of humility *Tahajjud* (supererogatory prayer) in the late hours of the night. Once it was his turn to pass the night with his beloved wife Ayesha[ra] The moment he covered himself with the quilt, he addressed her: Ayesha, with your permission I want to spend the night in worship, to which she willingly agreed. He spent the whole night in worship, which was full of humility; and such was his humility that the prayer-mat was wet. (1)

God promises exalted station to those who are regular and sincere in offering supererogatory prayer:

And wake up for it (the Qur'an) in the last part of the night as a supererogatory service for thee . It may be thy Lord will raise thee to an exalted station. (Chapter 17, V.80)

Definitely the Messenger's[saw] supererogatory prayer was par excellence, therefore the exalted station God bestowed on him is far above than anyone else. It is clarified that for true believers and pious persons the exalted station is nothing but to obtain extreme nearness with God, which the Messenger definitely obtained. Describing *Mi'raj* of the Prophet The Holy Qur'an says:

"When He was at the loftiest Horizon, then he drew near to God; then he came down to mankind, so that he became , as it were , one chord to two bows or closer still. Then He revealed to His servant which He revealed. The heart of the Prophet lied not regarding what he saw. (53: 8-12)

These verses mean that the Holy Prophet attained the utmost nearness to God. And the expression *Qabe Qausen* indicates extreme close union between two persons. In this sense of the expression the verse purports to say that he continued to scale the heights of spiritual ascension and to approach near God till all distances between them disappeared and the Holy Prophet[saw] became as it were one chord two bows.

And describing the Battle of Badr, Allah says:

You killed them not, but it was Allah Who killed them. And thou threwest not what thou didst throw, but

it was Allah Who threw. (8:18)

In this verse God is attributing two apparent actions – killing them (the disbelievers) and throwing stone on them – towards Himself.

In short, these two verses speak about the extreme nearness between God and the Prophet beyond human imagination. Intoxicated in love of God I quote some supplications of the Messenger[saw]:

O Allah! Grant me Your love and the love of that whose love will benefit me in Your sight. O Allah! All my favourite things that you have provided me, make them a source of power to get Your favourite things. My favourite things which You take away from me, replace them with Your favourite things. (2)

O Allah, I seek refuge in Thy good pleasure from Thy anger, and I seek refuge in Thy forgiveness from Thy punishment, and I seek in Thee from Thee. I cannot reckon Thy praise. Thou art as Thou hast lauded Thyself. (2)

O Controller of the hearts! Make firm my in Your faith. (2)

There is none worthy of worship except Allah, the Compassionate, the Kind. Holy is Allah, the Lord of the great Heavenly Throne. All praise belongs to Allah alone, Lord of the worlds. (2)

As related by Hadhrat Aisha[ra] and quoted by scholars of Tradition and Muslim historians, the last words the Holy Prophet[saw] uttered repeatedly just before his death were: With the Companion, the Most High. The Holy Prophet[saw] was happy that in the next world he would obtain closer nearness with God than what he could obtain in this world.

His union with God is continuously increasing even after his death because Allah and His angels send blessings on him and the believers, as commanded by God bless and salute him with the salutation of peace. (33:57

God says about the Messenger:

And thou dost surely possess high moral excellences. (68:5)

His moral excellences cannot be listed in this short article. What I want to point out is that although all Prophets exhibit moral excellences or virtues, the Holy Prophet[saw] was the best among them, not only in the combined virtues but in each virtue; and out of his own virtues; his worship was at the top. To excel others in any excellence is a marvel. But the real marvel lies in the fact that the excellence is transferred to the followers. God crowned the Messenger in both. The number and percentage of Muslim worshipers is many times more than the worshippers of the other religious groups combined together. Muslims offer five daily Prayers, whereas members of the other religious groups pray hardly once a day. And the effect of the Messenger's teaching of *Tawheed* is so strong that even those who practise polytheism at least verbally claim to be monotheist. That is why even the great Non-Muslim scholars have attributed him in very high regards. I quote only three.

The great thinker and playwright, George Bernard Shaw (1936):

I believe that if a man like him (Muhammad) were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it (will) be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today.

A great revolutionary leader, M.N. Roy (1939)

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Every Prophet establishes his pretension by the performance of miracles. On that token, Mohammad must be recognized by far the greatest of all prophets, before or after him. The expansion of Islam is the most miraculous of all miracles.

A great scholar and writer, Michael H. Hart (1978):

He was the only man who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels.

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THE HOLY PROPHET'S[saw] MIGRATION TO MEDINA

Muhammad Sharif Khan, Philadelphia

FIRST YEAR OF MIGRATION (HIJRA)

PROPHET'S ARRIVAL AT QUBA

Rabi'al-Awwal 11

It was noon of the fateful day, when suddenly whole city of Yethrib echoed with the cries of "*Allahho-Akbar*" (Allah is Greatest), as its inhabitants ran out frantically with their weapons to greet their Holy Master Muhammad [SAW] whom they have waited for long to arrive in their city. He was arriving from Mecca after an arduous eight day long continuous journey across burning hot Arabian Desert. Every one was anxious to witness the august historic moment when great prophesy of prophet's safe travel had just been fulfilled. Allah the Almighty had given respite to Muslims after 12 long years of hard sufferings from the tyrannical treatment of Meccans. It was really a great, great day for all Muslims to rejoice and thank Allah for His infinite Mercy and Compassion for delivering them from tyrannical Meccans.

Those were the great moments, the chosen one on whom Allah's last message to humanity was being revealed, to raise human status from lowest of his creation to the highest, at last was among them in flesh and blood. The prophet came in a strange land where every body was ready to sacrifice his life for his sake, leaving behind his ungrateful kith and kin, which were growing thirsty for his blood. He left his homeland behind with heavy heart.

The Holy Prophet[saw] stayed at Qu'ba, in the outskirts of Medina to meet companions who came to greet him. There was no seating arrangement, an ambiguity regarding the identity of the Holy Prophet[saw] occurred among companions who had not seen him before. They took Abu Bakr[ra] as the Prophet, since he had more gray hair. Until a sheet of cloth was stretched to provide shade over prophet's seat, that facilitated prophet's identity.

After having met people, Holy Prophet[saw] decided to stay temporarily in the town, about two miles from Medina city. He was accommodated at the house of an *Ansari* (local) Kalsum Bin Alhadam ,since most of the *Mohajreen* (immigrants) from Mecca were also staying in the town.

After three days of Holy Prophet's[saw] arrival in Quba, Hadhrat Ali[ra], arrived safely from Mecca, after having finished the job entrusted to him by the Holy Pophet[saw].

Moon Rises at Medinatul-Nabi (Yethrib)

Enthusiasm and joy of populace was unfathomable and unabated, hearts and souls of the *Yetribeans* were full of thanks and praise to Allah Almighty who fulfilled their heart's desire to host their beloved master in their city. Each family was hilarious and desirous to have the honor to welcome Holy Prophet in their humble house. Same desire was floating in every house all over the city. Until Holy Prophet announced that he would like to stay in the city with Banu Najjar family of his maternal grand parent Abdul Muttalib.

After stay of over ten days in Quba, prophet left for the inner city. It was an auspicious Friday. He was accompanied by a large party of *Ansar* and *Mohajareen*. From thence the city shed its old name "Yethrib" for Medina-tul-Nabi (city of the Prophet) or "Medina."

The Holy Prophet[saw] was riding his camel with Abu Bakr[ra] behind. The procession moved slowly, through the streets of the city. It stopped in the way for Friday prayer, the Holy Prophet[saw] delivered the sermon and led the prayer. Resuming its journey to the inner city with dignity and harmony, no body was in hurry. Everybody was enjoying the majestic company of their beloved master. They were chanting prayers thanking Allah Almighty for delivering His messenger among them.

As the procession passed through the streets, residents of each house presented themselves by respectfully standing outside of their door to welcome the honored guest.

The elder would offer his house, saying "O, prophet of Allah, it is my house, I present our lives and wealth to you, we have every thing to protect you. We implore you to honor us with your stay." The Holy Prophet[saw] would graciously thank and pray for them, so the procession slowly progressed through streets. Women and girls sang gleefully at roofs of houses at the beat of drums:

"FULL MOON has arisen on us,
From the mountain were we welcome our dear ones.
We are bound to thank our Allah
For ever, for ever!"
While groups of small boys chanted slogans in the streets of Medina: "Muhammad[saw] has come! Allah's prophet has arrived!"

The Abyssinian slaves were not be left behind, they expressed their delight by display of swordsmanship, along the procession route.

At last the procession reached section of the city with houses of Banu Najar, every one in the tribe was out to greet their beloved master and relative. While girls of the tribe sang at the beat of drums:

"We are girls of Banu Najjar.
How lucky we are, Muhammad prophet of Allah, is our guest!"

The Lucky Host

Every family in Banu Najjar was eager to have the honor to host the prophet. They would hold reigns of prophet's camel as an invitation. The Holy Prophet[saw] acknowledging their enthusiasm and greetings would say: "Let go reigns of the camel, it is being guided, wherever Allah wishes, it will sit by itself." Saying this he would loose reigns of the camel. The camel moved slowly forward, until it sat down in an inhabited plot of land, which belonged to two orphan children. The Holy Prophet[saw] with prayers alighted from the camel. Inquired: "Whose house is nearest from here?" Abu Ayyub Ansari hurried forward saying: "O, prophet of Allah! It is my house, it is my door! Please, honor me, come in."

The Holy Prophet[sawsaw] said: "Okay, go and prepare some place for our stay."

It was a two story house; Abu Ayyub wanted prophet to occupy the upper story. But keeping in view difficulty of people who would come to meet prophet, The Holy Prophet[saw] chose to stay at the first floor. Abu Ayyub and his wife could not sleep that night due to the thought that the Holy Prophet[saw] is staying under them. Moreover, a pitcher full of water was accidentally broken, Abu used his quilt to dry water lest it trickle down to disturb the holy guest.

In the morning Abu implored the Holy Prophet[saw] to shift into the upper story, at first prophet was reluctant, in view of Abu's insistence he conceded to his request. The Holy Prophet[saw] stayed in the house for seven months, until prophet's residence and mosque were ready. During his stay Abu and several other companions had the honor to serve food to the prophet and his family.

THE HOLY PROPHET'S[saw] ENGAGEMENTS IN MEDINA

The historic event of immigration from Mecca to Yethrib (initiated third phase in the life of the Holy Master, the phase which paved the way of to establish sovereignty of Allah Almighty and initiation of an era of calm, peace and prosperity in the world. During ten years of stay in Medina, message of Allah radiated out of the Arabian Peninsula to the corners of the world, humanity was redeemed from the yolk of customs, cultures and false gods.

In Medina the Holy Prophet[saw] initiated the spade work to establish future Islamic Empire:

He started educating legions of people entering in the pail of Islam, the norms of Islamic way of life, morals and worship. Arranged for boarding and lodging of the new comers. Construction work of *Masjd Nabvi* prophet's mosque), was initiated to provide Muslims a centre for offering regular prayers and a place to gather. *Adhan* was initiated to announce times of collective prayers and other national emergencies. Brotherhood ties were established between locals (*Ansar* and immigrants (*Mohajreen)* understanding between different factions of the Medinite society: Muslims, infidels, and Jews, was reached. Muslim's position in Medina was consolidated, and their credibility was established in the surrounding tribes, by signing pacts of mutual understanding and peace.

Weight of piety and cleanliness

After the arrival of the Holy Prophet[saw] in Medina, project of construction of *Masjid Nabvi* (Prophet's

mosque) was initiated. The Holy Prophet[saw] selected the site where his camel came to rest at his arrival. It was a sort of wasteland, with few unattended date palm trees and some scattered ruins of huts. The plot belonged to two orphan brothers, they offered the land free, but Holy Prophet paid them the price.

The Holy Prophet[saw] laid the foundation of the mosque with prayers, and took part in its construction as an ordinary laborer. The construction took long time, as the walls were built with stone slabs and bricks filled between pillars of date palm stems. The roof was support by beams formed by date palm stems tied together, inside filled with mud and date palm leaves. Beams were supported from underside by pillars made of date palm stems tied together. Against one of these pillars the Holy Prophet[saw] would later lean while delivering sermons, until a wooden pulpit was made for the purpose.

The floor was unpaved, became muddy in rains because water that dripped from the roof, causing problems for the worshippers. However, later it was paved by pebbles. The mosque faced Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. However in second year of *Hijra* the mosque was turned to face Mecca. Initially the mosque was 10 feet high, 105 feet long and 90 feet wide, soon it was expanded according to the needs of growing population.

The Holy Prophet's[saw] residence was constructed adjacent to the mosque. It was just a simple small room of 10-15 feet long. One of its doors opened in the mosque. Similar separate rooms were constructed for prophet's wives in the area.

A thatched platform "*Suffa*" was erected in one corner of the mosque courtyard for the homeless immigrants ("*As-hab-e-Suffa*," the people of the platform. They would remain day and night in the mosque, availing every opportunity to offer prayer in congregation and hear the Holy Prophet's[saw] speeches. They would pray for day and night, reciting the Holy Qura'n and learning the ways of Islam from the prophet. They had no financial support, the Holy Prophet[saw] would personally take care of their needs. Whenever he had something in his house, he would share it with them. Often the Holy Prophet[saw] himself would remain hungry and feed them. Similarly other Muslims would help them in their needs. As city expanded, more job opportunities were created, able bodied *As-hab-e-Suffa* got employed and sustain themselves. In later days when central treasury "*Baitul-Mal*" was established, old and sick were paid stipends from the public treasury.

The mosque was also used for meetings of officials, delegates coming from different parts of Arabia with the Holy Prophet[saw]. Consultations among companions were held, and also the law suits were heard and orders issued, and it was also used as national guest house and to house prisoners of war, who were held tied to the pillars.

Initiation of Adhan

Yet there was no system evolved to let people know the time of collective congregational prayers. Usually people would gather by guessing based on individual estimations. Suggestions of use of drum, flute or ringing of bells to announce the time were turned down one by one. However, at Hadhrat Umar's[ra] suggestion the Holy Prophet[saw] appointed Hadhrat Bilal[ra] to announce loudly saying: "Time for congregation prayer, time for congregational prayer!" One morning Abdullah Bin Zaid Ansari told the prophet that he was taught particular words for *Adhan* in a dream. The Holy Prophet[saw] listened and approved. The Holy Prophet[saw] instructed him to get memorize the words to Hadhrat Bilal[ra].

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HADITH

Hadhrat 'A'ishah[ra] relates that after migration to Medina, there was a night when the Messenger[saw] of Allah was unable to sleep. He[sa] said: "Would that some pious person was guarding me tonight. She[ra] said that at the same time they heard the tinkling noise of armament. He[saw] asked, 'Who is this?' The person outside replied: 'I am Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas.' The Messenger[saw] of Allah asked: 'Why did you come?' Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas said: 'I felt, in my heart, fear for the Messenger[sa] of Allah. Therefore, I have come to guard him[sa].' The Messenger[saw] of Allah prayed for him and went to sleep.' "

(Tirmidhi abwabul manaqib, mana-qib Sa'd bin AbiWaqqas[ra])

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Eidul Adha

Zahir Muhammad Mannan

"Convey to mankind; 'Surely myself (Muhammad) and my guidance and my Lord take me to the true path of perfect enlightenment and ultimate protection from any weakness. This is the ultimate and everlasting religion which was treaded before by Abraham, the one who was ever inclined towards goodness and was upright. And he was not from among those who depended upon anything other than the True God'. Convey also to everyone this ultimate truth; 'Truly, my obligations and prayers, my purity and sacrifices, this very short life that I was given, and my fast approaching death that I will experience, all rightfully belong to the One God from Whom all these graces emanated and Who is the real Originator of all things'" (Holy Qur'an 6:162-163).

We all know of the upright Patriarch Prophet Abraham[as] who we find as an honorable mention in almost every religion. So what's so special about him? Well, the main answer lies within a special commemoration being observed these very days by over one third of the world's population, that is, '*Eidul Adha* or the celebration of the power and spirit of sacrifice. Literally translated from Arabic though 'Eid ('ain ya daal) means to reproduce and excel, so '*Eidul Adha* in Arabic would actually mean to reproduce and even excel in the selfless act of sacrifice (s). What sacrifice (s) is one asked to reproduce? This brings us back to our central figure, "our father" Abraham (22:79), who is recorded in multiple Holy Books to have had an unusual dream from (apparently) God Almighty of sacrificing his first born. Frightening isn't it? Not to Abraham though, because he always inclined towards the goodness inherent in everything. Not only did he believe this message was from God, the Patient, in the form of a dream, but he took it seriously and with boldness and bravery materialized God's command (or so he interpreted). But he wasn't the only one, when asked about his thoughts about the dream, his beloved adolescent first born, whom he prayed sincerely to have (37:101), faithfully and patiently proclaims, "Do as thou art commanded (37:103)". Completely resigned to the will of his Father in Heaven, the Wise Creator, Abraham's first born becomes a strong devout soldier by submitting without falter to the Commander in Chief in Heaven. Whether his identity was Ishmael or Isaac is irrespective of the underlying lesson here. Anyway, there are many lessons to learn from this famous story which echoes across manifold religions. The chief principles to take home, however, are those of faith and obedience which stem from the titanium branch of sacrifice and ultimately from the intoxicating trunk of love. Faith that the unexpected dream, interestingly not verbal directive, was in fact from the apparently merciful God. Obedience to the command of God regardless of its shocking abnormality. Sacrificing from that which you love most in this life so as to purify yourself and your devotion continuously until the only worthy love that remains is God itself, the Source of all sources. This is why God stopped Abraham from actually fulfilling the dream, because God, the All Aware, saw that Abraham was literally about to pierce the blade into the flesh of his beloved son and announced, "You have surely fulfilled your dream'" (37:106). Thus did God reward those who incline towards and perform goodness. Surely that was a powerfully manifest trial and God ransomed him with a quaking sacrifice. Would any of us do the same? I think we all know the answer to that. So, God tells us to remember this faith shaking tribulation simply through prayers and the sacrificing of a lamb which, in the language of dreams, symbolizes a son.

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HADITH

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates that the Messenger[saw] of Allah said: "Every important matter, which is not commenced with the praise (of Allah) is devoid of blessings and is imperfect."

According to another tradition: "Every conversation that does not begin with the praise of Allah is devoid of blessings and is ineffective."

(Ibni Majah abwabun nikah bab khitbatun nikah, Abu Dawud kitabul adab babul huda- filkalam)

HADHRAT SAHIBZADA ABDUL LATIF'S MARTYRDOM ON JULY 14, 1903 AND UNSUCCESSFUL CONSPIRACY OF AMEER HABIBULLAH AGAINST THE PROMISED MESSIAH[as] IN 1904

Dr. Mirza Sultan Ahmad

Translated by: Arifa Haleem

Hadhrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif's student Hadhrat Maulvi Abdur Rehman was martyred in Afghanistan on June 20th 1901. When Sahibzada Abdul Latif arrived on the border of Afghanistan for demarcation i.e. to establish the Durand Line between Afghanistan and India, then at that occasion somebody at the place of Tull gave him some books of The Promised Messiah[as] .He took these books and came to his village Syed Gah (Khost). He was very happy about this thing and expressed it to the students by saying," we were waiting for this". Hadhrat Maulvi Abdur Rehman was also present in this gathering. He said "I will go to Qadian and find out all about it".Hadhrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif sent him to Qadian and emphasized to investigate fully and find out all about it. He presented himself to the Promised Messiah[as] and took the pledge of allegiance. In 1897 the Promised Messiah[as] published "The End of Athim" and also entered in it 313 names of his companions. Among them Hadhrat Maulvi Abdur Rehman's name is number 111. He came to Qadian only two or three times and enjoyed the blessed company of the Promised Messiah[as]

He was an employee of the government of Amir Abdur Rehman of Afghanistan and used to get allowance from him. At last his complaint was made to Amir Abdur Reedman. When the Amir ordered the Governor of Khost to arrest him, he went underground. His property was confiscated and his family was ordered to be sent to Kabul. When action had been taken upon it then he himself went to Kabul and presented himself before the Amir. Amir Abdur Rehman asked him, why did he go to the tribal area? He replied," I went to Qadian for the service of the Government and I have brought with me the books of that the person who claims to be a Messiah". The Amir took away the books from him and sent him to jail. It is said that he was kept in jail for about two months and then suffocated him to death by putting a pillow on his face. His date of martyrdom has been stated as June 20th 1901. After this these news were received that reports against Sahibzada Abdul Latif have also been sent to Amir Abdur Rehman.So on the advice of some people, he went to Kabul in the court of Amir Abdur Rehman. Amir was very happy to see him and said, "Some reports against you have been received but I have ignored them and I am very happy to see you." According to the opinion of some people it was better for him to stay this time in Kabul. After getting permission from the Amir he started living in Kabul. It is necessary to explain here that up to this time the illness of the Amir was in advance stages.(For details go through *Tarikhe Ahmadiyyat* and Sheikh Ajam and see his student Author Mr. Mir Masood Sahib.)

His desease i.e., gout had become so aggressive that he became handicapped and could not walk any more. Even in the room, the servants used to carry him from one place to another. In the spring of 1901 he got an attack of paralysis and sometimes his mind did not work rightly. Sometimes it so happened that due to his mental condition even his close friends used to make him have decisions of their own choice. The incident of Maulvi Abdur Rehman's martyrdom occurred in the same period. In the last days of his life Amir Abdur Rehman got gangrene in the legs. Due to its stinking smell it was difficult to stand close to him. (Under the Absolute Amir of Afghanistan by Frank Martin p 124-126)

It should be clear that up to this time Sahibzada Abdul Latif did not come to Qadian.In the last days of his illness, it was the wish of Amir Abdur Rehman that Hadhrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif should continue to see him. So he used to go to see the Amir in his palace at Bala Bagh. One day when he came back after seeing him, he said, the Amir is seriously sick. It is better for him to go now because in this way the people will be saved from his atrocities. On the first of October he went to the palace and handed over his horse to Syed Ahmad Noor Sahib. The people were fearful and silent. He immediately came out and informed Syed Noor that the Amir has died. At that time the news of the death of the Amir was kept secret. There was fear of rebellion and rift about the successor At the same time in Bala Bagh the succession of Amir Habibullah was announced. The chiefs who were present there, they according to the traditions of that time took an oath of allegiance to Habibullah.When Hadhrat Sahibzada was called for the oath of allegiance he said, "I will take an oath on the condition that you will do nothing against *Sharia*." When Habibullah confirmed about it, then he took pledge of allegiance. After this Habibullah was crowned by tying the royal turban and Hadhrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif Sahib was asked to do it. When two or three twists were left then the *Qadhi-ul-Qadha* requested him to leave the rest of them for him, so that he could also get the blessings. After this the rest of the turban was tied by the *Qadhi-ul-Qadha* .The coronation ceremony of Ameer Habib ullah in general audience was performed on third of October by his brother Sardar Nasrullah . (under the Absolute Amir of Afghanistan, by Frank Martin p125-128.)

Now we come to the real subject and see what was going on in Qadian. Though the inspirational sermon was delivered in 1901 yet in those days the Promised Messiah was busy in the publication of its commentary. (Al-Hakam October 1901 p. 16 0

The news of the death of Hadhrat Maulvi Abdur Rehman was not yet received in Qadian. On September at about twelve o' clock in the night Hadhrat *Amman Jan* saw a dream and narrated it to the Promised Messiah[as]. When he paid attention to it, it was revealed to him that this resurrection that now has happened after a thousand years' death is not humanly possible .As God Almighty created Jesus without a father, the Promised Messiah[as] was also blessed with spiritual life without any teacher or spiritual guide. When again he paid attention then after a little drowsiness it was revealed to him ", Free Masons will not be overpowered to kill him."

The Promised Messiah[as] says, I thought about Free Mason i.e. those who have secret intentions or plans. Then he says, how fine is this point that God Almighty has placed a magnificent glad tiding and prophecy in it .The people will plan to kill us but God Almighty will not let them overcome us. (Al-Hakam October 10th ,page 190)

It is worth mentioning that when the Promised Messiah[as] received this revelation, then within 24 hours that person became the ruler of Afghanistan, who afterwards, took serious actions against Ahmadiyyat. Later on he joined ihe Free Mason organization. (History of Afghanistan by Percy Sykes vol.2, p. 259)

This fact is also worth mentioning that a few months before this revelation, the British Queen died and in her place Edward the Seventh was enthroned. Edward seventh was an active member of Free Mason organization. One of the few serious matters of his life was his connection with the Free Mason organization. Till his coronation he had been performing the duty as a Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England.

It is worth mentioning that when he went to India as a crown prince he included Amritsar in his visit. There he participated in a very big ceremony of the local Christians. This ceremony was held at the residence of Robert Clark. Henry Martin Clark who later on filed a false law suit of attempted murder against the Promised Messiah[as] was the foster son of Robert Clark. Athim was also one of those people who on this occasion presented an address to the crown prince. (Robert Clark Of The Punjab, The Missionary Statesman by Henry Martin Clark p.300-303)

Everyone knows about these details that on July 1903 Sahibzada Abdul Latif was stoned to death by the command of Amir Habibullah but so far as the revelation related to Free Masons is concerned, the words show that whatever group is mentioned in the prophecy, it will also have secret and bad intentions to attack and kill the Promised Messiah[as] but God Almighty will not let them be successful. The Free Mason King got Sahibzada Abdul Latif and Maulvi Abdur Rehman assassinated but this matter requires investigation whether this group had also some intentions and

plans about the holy person of the Promised Messiah[as].

Hadhrat Syed Nazir Hussain resident of Kalowal District Sialkot, one of the companions of the Promised Messiah[as] narrates that he went to Qadian and took the pledge of allegiance on August 1903.By this time the news of the martyrdom of Sahibzada Abdul Latif had been received in Qadian.It was well known that Amir Habibullah had sent some men to get the Promised Messiah[as] killed. So on the instructions of the Promised Messiah [as] two men for precautionary measures and for keeping a watch used to sleep at night on the threshold and once Nazir Hussain himself also performed this duty. (Register Rawayat Rafqa vol.7 p.226)

It is necessary to see if there is any external evidence too that Amir Habibullah after having Sahibzada Abdul Latif been killed, had bad intentions toward the Promised Messiah[as]

Many papers which were kept secret in the past have now become open and known. At this time the British Library has got a big record of the Indian Government .In this connection this part of the record of the Home Department of Indian Government is written exactly as it is.

IOR: Z/P/I460 GOVT. OF INDIA.

Index to Proceedings of the Home Department for the year 1904. Calcutta. Suptdt. Govt. of India Press. 1905. 578pp:

P.23: AMIR_____

Representation made by the Amir in regard to a libelous article in the Akhbar-e-Am by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. on account of one of his followers having been stoned to death by His Highness orders.

(Branch/public: Month/ April: Prog.No./5: page/ Deposit (Confidl.)

p.212: Ghulam Ahmad. Mirza

Question whether legal action could be taken against for publishing a libelous article against the Amir in Akhbar-e-Am.

(Branch/public: Month/ .pril: Progs. No./5: Page/ leposit (Confidential)

P.292

Representation made by the Amir in regard to a libelous article in the Akhbari-e-Am by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. on account of one of his followers having been stoned to death by

His Highness orders.

(Branch/public: Month/ April: Prog. No./5:page/ Deposit (Confidl)

This record was first brought forth as a result of the research that was done in the British library by the Fazl-e-Umar Foundation. When Mr. Naseer Qamar contacted the British library then it was known that the summary of this record was available there but that the detailed manuscript from which this record was prepared does not exist in the record.

If at this time by putting aside the official references when we review this part of the summary of the annual performance of the Home Department of the Indian Government, the following facts become clear:

At some time after the great sacrifice of Hadhrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif, Amir Habibullah had asked the British Government to take legal action against the Promised Messiah[as] because due to his follower's stoning to death, the Promised Messiah has got the contemptuous article published against Amir Habibullah in *Akhbar-e-Aam*. In April 1904 The Home Department of the Indian Government deliberated about this representation also ,whether in this connection any legal action against The Promised Messiah[as] can be taken or not. The facts that are revealed only by looking at this summary from many aspects are astonishing.

1. According to the *Jama'at's* record, at that time no article of the Promised Messiah[as] on this subject was published in *Akhbar-e-Aam*.
2. Related to this, the Promised Messiah[as] wrote a book, *Tadhkratul Shahadetain* .The article that was published in this book or on this subject in *Al-Hakam* did not contain any word against any aspect of Ameer Habibullah's life due to which there could be any chance to take legal action against the author. Maximally the words used for Amir Habibullah were," he did not fear God a little bit. "Even in that period, this type of writing could not be considered such a type of writing against which any legal action could be thought. It is true that Afghanistan was going through different types of circumstances but Amir Habibullah could not be so much unaware of the Indian or world affairs that he did not know even such a basic thing.

3. It is also mentioned in the summary. Moreover at that time everyone had the knowledge of these facts that Amir Habibullah had got Sahibzada Abdul Latif stoned to death only due to his religious opinions and after that whatever writing from the *Jama'at* was seen, that was written in its reaction.
On one side a person has been brutally assassinated but on the other side, there is such a sensitivity that if something is written about it, then the idea of taking legal action went to their nerves. This thing is more astonishing that a part of that time's government also started thinking about this representation and whether there could any legal action taken against the Promised Messiah[as]. It should be clear that the word "confidential' used three times in the summary is making it clear that all this proceeding was going on secretly.
4. It is worth mentioning that Amir Habibullah and before him Amir Abdur Rehman used to get regular allowance on yearly basis from the British Government but when two governments have long term relations then such times also come when tension between their mutual relations takes place and such times also come when they have warmth in their relationship. This is an interesting reality that on July 1903 when on the order of Amir Habibullah, Sahibzada Abdul Latif Sahib was stoned to death then apparently at that time there was tension between Amir Habib ullah and the British Government of India. We do not know when between the end of April 1903 and 1904, Amir Habibullah made representation to the Indian Government to take legal action against the Promised Messiah[as] but after April 1904 when this representation was deliberated fervor and friendship started to flourish between Amir Habibullah and the British Government.

After the coronation the reason of Amir Habibullah's tension with the British Government was that Amir Habibullah was of the view that the British Government of India had an agreement of friendship with his father, Amir Abdur Rehman under which Amir Abdur Rehman used to get an allowance and that agreement still existed because that was between the two governments. On the other hand ,the Viceroy of India was of the view that this agreement was only with the person of Amir Abdur Rehman, but now when a new Amir of Afghanistan was present, a new agreement with him wiould be made. For this reason, Lord Curzon invited Amir Habibullah to come to India but at this time Amir Habibullah was not willing to leave Afghanistan. It is more surprising that with this background, Amir Habibullah could make this useless representation to the government of India because he had got stoned only one Ahmadi to death and an article was written against him, therefore, the British Government should take legal action against the writing of the article. This is possible only under the condition that some elements of the Indian Government had been given the impression that if they write such a type of letter, then it would be deliberated.
5. There is another puzzle which requires solving. Sahibzada Abdul Latif was martyred on July 1903.Within a few months i.e., in July 1903 *Tadhkiratush Shahadatain* had been published. It is worth asking why the representation that Amir Habibullah had made against the Promised Messiah[as] was deliberated in April 1904 and after that this question was never raised. Either this deliberation never happened or after this month this matter did not continue further. One aspect of this review could also be that in April 1904 did any change in the Indian government ocurr due to which the deliberation on this matter was started.

So far as the central government of India is concerned, the change that happened was that in April 1904 Lord Curzon went back to Britain on leave and Oliver Villiers Russell, Second Baron Ampthill, started working as an officiating viceroy of India and Oliver Russel went on working in this post up to 1904. He was actually the governor of the Province of Madras. He was the older son of 1st Baron Ampthill. He got education in Eton and Oxford. In 1900 he worked as a Governor of Madras. A prominent aspect of his personality was that from his time as a student in Oxford University he had become a member of the Free Mason organization and obtained outstanding success in it. When Oliver Russell was the Governor of Madras, then from 1901 to 1906, he was also the Grand Master of Free Mason Madras .After that in England he went on working in the position of Pro Grand Master. It is essential to see that after April 1904 until December 1904 i.e., to that time when Lord Ampthill had been an officiating Viceroy, in which way the relations between Amir Habibullah and the British government of India were going. As we have already mentioned at that time there was tension between

the two parties. Though even in this period Amir Habibullah was trying to maintain and flourish his friendship with the British Government and in the same period he accepted the British mediation for the control line in Sistan but the historical facts tell us that while Oliver Russell, Baron Ampthill's was officiating as Viceroy many distinct steps were taken to improve the relations with Amir Habib ullah. So by ignoring the previous discussions in November 19014 the officiating viceroy sent his special ambassador Dane to Kabul. This special ambassador started negotiations and soon the friendly atmosphere prevailed so much that Amir Habibullah gave him this silly offer that by using the land of Afghanistan both Afghanistan and Britain together should attack Russia. The British Ambassador emphasized that in order to get help from Britain, they should grow close relations between them. On December 14th, Amir Habibullah held a special court with the British Ambassador. So due to this visit the relations entered into a period of new warmth and fervor and Amir Habibullah also gave him the offer of more mutual projects. The problem was solved when after coming back and getting the position of viceroy, Lord Curzon wiped out those hopes by saying that the mission of this ambassador to Kabul was not to settle these details. When Amir Habibullah would come to India on his visit then the details would be settled.

On this turn the circumstances took another shape. Extreme differences took place between the Indian Viceroy, Lord Curzon and Kitchner, the commander in chief of the Indian forces. When the central government totally refused to accept the opinion of Lord Curzon, then he had to resign .Kitchner was not only the commander in chief of the Indian forces but was also a prominent member of the Free Mason Organization and Grand Master of Punjab. So in place of Lord Curzon, Lord Minto was appointed Viceroy of India. Lord Minto had been a governor of Canada and he was also a member of the Free Mason Organization. At that time this news was prominently published in all the newspapers of the world. Due to his differences with Kitchener, Curzon had to quit the position of viceroy.(see The Gazette, Montreal, 21 Google, 1 August 1905. Its copy is present on Google News.). Then within a few first months of Lord Minto's time ie.in the beginning of 1906, Mir Habibullah visited India. Manmohan welcomed him on the border, he himself was a member of Free Masons and according to him, Amir Habibullah repeatedly insisted that he should also be made a member of the Free Masons. Even before this Amir Habibullah had a great knowledge about this organization. He had already met some Free Mason members and was their admirer. Kitchner, who was the Grand Master of the Free Masons of Punjab, in order to make Amir Habibullah a member of the Free Masons obtained permission from the Duke of Connaught. After his brother, King Edward the 7th became the king of Britain, the Duke of Connaught was the Master of the Free Mason United Grand Lodge of Britain and at this time Amir Habibullah on February 2, 1907 was secretly made a member of the Free Mason Organization. (An account of the entry of H.M. Habibullah Khan into Free Masonry-1907 by Macmohan is present on internet.)

At last Amir Habibullah met his end and he was assassinated. As in *Kitabul Mukazebeen* these facts have been described in detail. All the characters that made a conspiracy against the Promised Messiah[as] had a bad end. Amir Habibullah's relations with the British government and of becoming a Free Mason, for details see Article: The relations of Chiefs of Afghanistan with the British. Al-Fazl, Feb. 7, 9, 11-2004. Article: - Free Mason King of Afghanistan. Al-Fazl January 7, 2010-

God knows about the actual cause but at that time practically no action against the Promised Messiah[as] was initiated. At that time these facts were known to *Jama'at Ahmadiyya* that Amir Habibullah wished that with the help of the British Government a conspiracy against the Promised Messiah[as] should be hatched but God Almighty knew all about them. This deliberation was done at the level of the Indian governmentin April 1904. It is clear that the initial action on Amir Habibullah's representation was taken before it. Now when we review the revelations of the Promised Messiah[as], we see the following prophecies were revealed in March 1904:

On March 27th it was revealed to the Promised Messiah[as,]

One who shoots the arrow at the king of the time; he himself will be killed by the same arrow.

The dream on March 31st 1904:

I saw in a dream that I am standing near the fire and the skirt of my garment fell into the fire but fire did not even touch it. After that it was revealed,

Benevolence of God, Blessing of God.

On April the revelation was,

Ajerto mi nunnare.

I have saved from fire.

On April 1904 it was revealed in Persian,

Aman ast dar makani muhabbat sara'ay ma,

Our house which is our house of love, here it is peace in every way.

These revelations were showing that the enemy may be very influential, he may hatch a very serious conspiracy but God Almighty Himself will protect the Promised Messiah[as] and the enemy will be unsuccessful and disappointed.

Note:

The incidents of the martyrdom of Hadhrat Sahibzada Abdul Latif have many times been described in the Community's literature. The purpose of this article is not to explain the details of this incident but its purpose is to mention about a conspiracy that was hatched afterwards. From this aspect many facts that have come to light are still incomplete. So this is not a final research. Was the occurrence of these incidents a part of the same conspiracy or it was just a chance that such incidents happened one after another. Still nothing can be said with surety. Which secrets will be disclosed in the future research, time will answer this question.

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PERSONAL STATEMENT

Maryam Zakria

"Why do you wear that on your head"?

I stop writing my essay, my thought left entirely unfinished. "Here we go again", I think. It's not that I mind answering that question; rather, it's some of the reactions I get that really bother me. "It's due to religious purposes", I respond. I try hard not to lose my thought. "So you're forced to wear it?" Stunned, I reply, "No, it's my own choice". I elucidate the motive behind my wearing the *hijab* to her, but her look, one of confusion and disgust, tells me I'm not getting through. "That doesn't make sense to me... Why is your religion so weird? You guys even believe killing is a good thing." Now I know precisely where this conversation is headed, and I know instantly no matter how hard I try or the interest I show in defending my faith, I will ultimately be unsuccessful with this particular person.

But I take a shot anyway. "We don't believe that, we believe in peace." I get a quick reply of: "Then what about 9/11?" I hate when anyone makes such monstrous inferences about Muslims, and I hate how one event has overshadowed the rich and deep 1400 year history of my religion. I try hard not to lose my thought but it has faded away, just as any potential friendship I felt towards this girl begins to fade. "Terrorists do not spread the right message about Islam, that's not what Islam actually is. Every religion has their own terrorists, but it doesn't mean they define the religion" I know she doesn't understand, and if she does, she doesn't care, but this is where our conversation ends. I can no longer focus on my essay. Not many can comprehend the struggle Muslims go through because of terrorism. No matter how greatly I try to fit in, there are many who see me in my hijab and rather stare or turn their heads.

I try to stop my blood from boiling any longer. I sit back, tell myself to relax. Alternatively, I have a flashback: *My Sikh neighbor is in the car with us. We stop at a red light... The man in the motorcycle next to us throws a rock at the window and yells "Get out of our country you terrorists." No one speaks in the car for a couple minutes after that.* The man assumed that my neighbor was Muslim because of the turban on his head. 9/11 not only affected the lives of those who lost their loved ones but also affected the life of every Middle Eastern individual living in the United States. I open my eyes, grab the half written personal statement on my desk, and rip it up. Although cultural diversity is an important topic, I now know what I will write my personal statement about, I am an Ahmadi Muslim living in the United States; I am not a terrorist.

INTERFAITH SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHTS

Touba Khurshid, Minnesota Chapter

The Minnesota Interfaith Open Forum (MIOF) held its third symposium of the year 2012 at Brooklyn Park Church on October 7th, 2012. The MIOF is collaboration between Hindu, Jewish, Christian and Islamic communities in Minnesota where the Muslims are represented by the Ahamdiyya Muslim Community, Minnesota Chapter. The MIOF organizes three symposiums every year on preselected topics. Each of the three member organizations take turns to host one of the three events. The October 7th symposium was hosted by the Church in which various speakers representing Jewish (Rabbi Edelheit), Muslim (Chaplain Hasan Hakeem, National Tabligh Secretary of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of USA), Hindu (Mr. Gopal Khanna) Buddhist (Rev. Ted Meissner) and Christian (Rev. Doug Mork) faith traditions had a chance to speak about the chosen topic in regards to their faith. Also, a Question & Answer session was held at the end.

The topic of the symposium was 'Separation of State and Religion' which was chosen due to the election timing. The symposium was therefore marked by the presence of a number of local politicians and potential candidates alongside other participants. The program began with the Jewish Perspective on the topic by Rabbi Edelheit. He mentioned that state should not establish religion but protect it. Pointing out his observation of anti-Semitism such as the 'flunking of Jewish students from a dental college' and Jews having to ask for time off during their high holidays. Being in minority in the state of Minnesota, he suggested that Jews are ignored and the dominant faith is favored. Therefore, he focused on the importance of fighting anti -Semitism in order to establish equal rights for the Jews.

The Islamic perspective on the topic was presented by Chaplain Hakeem who started by narrating the story of Dr. John Alexander Dowie who sought to impose religion on civic life and the ill consequences of such an action. He gave an example from the present time where individuals are persecuted for their beliefs such as the martyrdom of 80 Ahmadis in Pakistan in 2010. Recently, a politician in Pakistan promised a reward of 100,000 dollars for killing the individual responsible for making the anti-Islamic movie. Relating this example, he pointed out that before politicking, these individuals should strive to act according to the teachings of Islam which states that "there is no compulsion in religion." Chaplain Hakeem also defended importance of separating state and religion by providing examples from the character of Prophet Muhammad. The Hindu speaker described democracy as the platform to establish principles for equality between people. It allows people to freely pursue the liberty of life. To expand on his point, he spoke about Hinduism or any other faith being a way of life. He added that since continuous improvement of one's self is crucial, beliefs and public law together allows people to become better and continuously improve. He stressed that religion should not supersede government/constitution as both create values and rules and are equally important. He concluded his talk by saying that rulers should rule in such a way as to do good for people and for their well-being.

The Buddhist perspective on the topic was presented by Ted Meissner who started by pointing out the imperfection in humans and the room for constant improvement. He added that it is crucial to stop choosing one religious group over another group and instead try to find similarities that we all share. 'Take fences down, build bridges' he said. He told a story in which a grandfather tells his grandson about two people inside you - one which possesses good qualities and the other which pushes you to do bad. The person who you are depends whom you feed between these two.

The last speaker presented the Christian perspective on the topic. He mentioned that there is plenty to be done in terms of not proclaiming a specific culture but making room for all cultures. He mentioned that there is particular responsibility over Christians on making space for free practice, as it is the dominant faith in the US. He added 'We don't want state deciding religion and dominant religion controlling state because damage will be caused to both sides if either is in control'. To emphasize on the topic, he said that the public life should not be dictated by religious life. He highlighted the importance of making the

world a better place and mentioned that all people are created in the image of God. His concluding remark on the topic was the importance of establishing common good by building a civil society that works together and partner to make the world a better place.

At the end, a lively Question & Answer session took place, where speakers had a chance to further explain teachings of their faith. Following the Q&A session, refreshment was provided enabling everyone to mingle and build friendships.

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Hadhrat Abu Hanifah[ra] relates: "Once I entered the *'Baitul Haram'* (the House of Allah) and saw a huge circle. I asked my father, whose circle is this? He told me that this was the circle of Hadhrat 'Abdullah bin Harith bin Jaz'iz-Zubaidi[ra], a Companion of the Holy Prophet[sa]. At this, I rushed forward and heard Hadhrat 'Abdullah bin Harith bin Jaz'iz-Zubaidi[ra] saying: 'I heard the Messenger[sa] of Allah say: 'A person who delves deep into the religion of Allah, Allah the Exalted Himself suffices him for his important affairs and grants provisions from sources he cannot even imagine.' "

(Musnadul Imamul A'zam kitabul 'ilm, p 20)

Hadhrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas[ra] relates that the Messenger[sa] of Allah said: "When you pass through the Gardens of Paradise, graze in it. The Companions asked: 'O Messenger[saw] of Allah! What are the Gardens of Paradise?' He said, 'Meetings of knowledge.' "

(At-Targhib wa't-Tarhib bab At-Targhib fi majalisatul ulama', p 76/1 ba hawalah attibrani fil kabir)

The Generosity of the Citizens of America: As Seen Through My Experience with Humanity First's "Feed the Hungry" Campaign

Najia Humayun, Atlanta Jama'at

By the grace of Allah, as an Ahmadi living in the United States, I lead a blessed, comfortable life. I have never had the need for a thought to cross my mind about whether or not I would be able to afford my next meal. But even within the small town that I call home, people are hurting, and homeless shelters are rapidly crowding. As the recession bears on, jobless levels surge, and more and more people are reduced to the means of not even being able to obtain food by themselves.

So, as part of Humanity First's "Feed the Hungry" Campaign, my mother, younger brother and I organized and carried out food drives within our local community. We gave all of the donations to a local homeless shelter. First, we set up boxes in five different locations around the community. We collected 108 total items through this, *Mashal Alah*. Our main food drive was a one day drive that was held at a Wal Mart. Before this drive, I sent an announcement about it to the local newspaper. We handed out approximately 700 flyers to customers as they entered, and collected any items they bought as they exited. Mashallah, through this, we collected a total of 543 items. At the end of both food drives, I also sent a thank you letter to the editor to the local newspaper.

This food drive showed me the extraordinary generosity only the hand of Allah Almightly can bring out in His people. One kind man saw us working in the heat of the sun, and took the effort to bring us a cooler of ice and water bottles just for us to drink. One compassionate woman came to us with an entire shopping cart full of needed items. One couple drove by and gave us two hundred dollars in cash as a donation. And countless others also came to us with cans and jars of food in hand, eager to help out. Every donation, large or small, was a sacrifice that each donator was willing to take out of their means. *Masha Allah*, such is the help of Allah *Ta'alah*, such is the generosity of the unknown citizens of America, even amidst the growing tensions of recession and threat of collapse. May Allah continue to bless Humanity First and bring the message of Ahmadiyyat to the corners of the Earth, *Insha Allah.*

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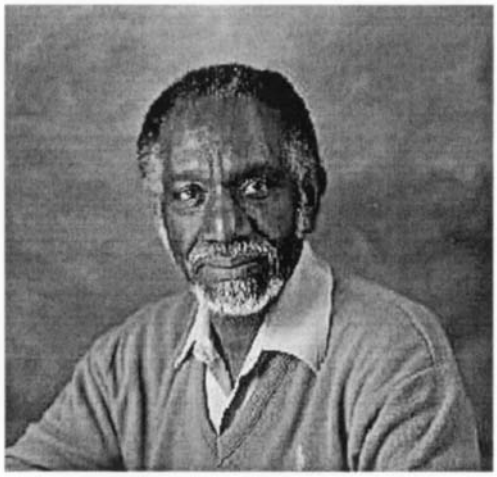
MOHSIN MAHMUD

Shoeb Abul Kalam, New York



A *Moosi*, a Mufti Muhammad Sadiq Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, and a dynamic figure in the New York *Jama'at,* Mohsin Mahmud Sahib passed away on Friday October 19th, 2012 at 9:01am at the age of 87 years old in his home in Queens Village New York City after an ongoing battle with cancer. (To Allah we belong, and to Him we shall return).

Mohsin Mahmud Sahib was a devoted and dedicated member of the New York *Jama'at* for decades. He served as *Tabligh* Secretary and was appointed as the Vice-President of the New York *Jama'at* for many years where he served with dedication and commitment and remained dedicated to the service of humanity and Islam. In 2009, he was honored with the Mufti Muhammad Sadiq Lifetime Achievement Award. He was a pioneer in the New York *Jama'at*.

Mahmud Sahib was born in Queens, New York in 1925. His parents who emigrated from the Barbados. As a child of age three he was transferred to foster care and from there, he was placed in various Christian homes till he reached age of 19. Mahmud Sahib served in the second world war from 1944 to 1946. He was able to visit New Guinea and the Philippines during his time in the army. Upon his arrival back he stayed with his parents in Manhattan for some time. Mahmud sahib took a job with the DSNY where he remained employed for about 34 years. Mahmud Sahib was always actively seeking the truth and searching for the God and from the early 50's, he would go back to his hometown in 118th street in New York City where he found his optimum satisfaction, he met members of the Ahmadiyyat Muslim Community preaching on the streets and he took interest. He was fortunate enough to pray inside the first mosque in New York, on 138th street in Manhattan back in the 1950's. He was fond of Ghulam Yasin Sahib, the Missionary in charge at that time. Yasin Sahib served the New York *Jama'at* from 1947 - 1956. Mahmud sahib recalls, at that time New York *Jama'at* consisted of 40 members; 30 men and 10 women. Mahmud sahib often tagged along with Yasin sahib who used to deliver lectures at the New York University and in churches in Boston, Philadelphia, Hartford, Camden, Newark, Patterson, West New York and Long Island. He was always very keen in strengthening the bond of brotherhood between members with a wide smile. Dale Carnegie once said, "Remember that a man's name is to him the sweetest and most important sound in the English language." Changing your name especially in the 60's was considered exigent and audacious, yet this Mohsin Sahib faced this daunting challenge and changed his name from Louis to Mohsin Mahmood. He was well-liked and respected at work and although changing his faith and his name presented challenges at times, he said he "won respect by demanding it in a respectful manner". Although he was afraid of a backlash, changing his name was quite empowering. One of his bosses at the time, Mrs. Birch, even called a meeting, letting everyone know that Mohsin Sahib had changed his name and wished to be called Mohsin Mahmud from now on and therefore everyone would need to abide by his wishes. She even told them "if you can't get along with Mohsin, you can't get along with anybody."

Mahmud Sahib had a strong affection in reading *Jama'at* books, any new book comes out, it was a must have for him. His personal home library is truly a treasure as some of the books from his collection are not available today in print. He was very robust in the *Jama'at* and has served it throughout his life even during his death bed. He was so devoted in *Tabligh* that throughout the years, he would buy *Jama'at* books with his own money and distribute them to the interested people to help spread the true Islam. After accepting Ahmadiy-

yat, Mohsin Sahib devoted most of his free time spreading the message of love and peace that Ahmadiyyat embodies. He, along with the few members of the *Jama'at* during the late 1950s, gathered enough money to buy a manual copier. A photocopy machine from the 50's did not print hundreds of copies with the touch of a button rather the members of the *Jama'at* would manually make individual copies of flyers, pamphlets and books after typing up themselves before they went out for mass distribution. It was the 1950s, when racism was rampant but that did not dissuade the hearts of the devoted men. They would haul a ladder in the heart of Manhattan, climb to the top and boldly proclaim "Jesus didn't die on the cross!" or "The Messiah has come." On one such occasion, three members of the *Jama'at* were arrested and spent a night in jail. Mohsin Sahib had several opportunities to meet Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] on several occasions whenever Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV[rh] visited New York in the 80's and the 90's. Mohsin Sahib was also fortunate to meet late Sir Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan Sahib[ra]. Mohsin Sahib would meet him on several occasions and once accompanied him to a *Nikah* ceremony. The memories were so fresh and crisp that he stated,

Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan Sahib[ra] "loved his brothers". Mohsin Sahib used to be on top of the list always in the New York *Jama'at* when it came for monetary sacrifices although he was not a *Moosi* till 2005. He was a retiree for a long time yet he had commendable spirit for financial sacrifices. He was in the forefront whenever there was a monetary challenge, i.e. once *Jama'at* USA made the program of standing first in the world in *Waqf-e-Jadid* contribution and Mohsin Sahib wholeheartedly donated $10,000. He used to donate money regularly for the *Jama'at* and was among the few who immensely donated his wealth to purchase the new Bait -uz-Zafar in Queens as he offered another ten thousand US dollars besides the regular yearly *chandas*. He used to motivate the youth in raising money for the mosque fund as he came up with the save-a-quarter-a-day drive among the youngsters of Queens. His passion for commitment and service beautifully shine through and are an example for us today.

In his own words, Mahmud Sahib said, "growing up in the 60's after accepting Islam Ahmadiyyat, you had to get involved". He used to always interact with the youth in Queens and his message to the youth was, "Commitment is the key to success, you have to commit yourself and be true to yourself in serving the *Jama'at*...this *Jama'at* is not a club not a hangout, you can honestly benefit from it...make some sacrifice for the cause.. it is not important what has been done, what is important is what are you going to do". He often used to speak out to the youth saying "It's one thing to say who you are, it's another thing to live that person everyday". Mahmud Sahib's message to the youth was "you do everything you can as a Muslim on a daily basis". Once he was asked why he accepted Ahmadiyyat? He enthusiastically replied: "I came into Ahmadiyyat because it was the True Islam. All the people, who were intellectually motivated, nationally motivated and spiritually motivated, were all Ahmadī Muslims, and they became my mentors, my tutors, and my friends. I pray for them and I thank Allah for bringing these people in my life. I will always be grateful to them for the path they showed me, *Al-Ḥamdu Lillāhi Rabbil-'Ālamīn.* "

Mohsin Sahib played a role of a *Murabbi Atfal* for this humble servant while growing up in Queens. I recall him dropping me home whenever I did not have a ride after Tahir school on few Saturdays from Bait-uz-Zafar in his antique station wagon along with his wife. His wife, Fatima Sahiba is an inspirational teacher who would teach Islamic History in our Tahir School and would share *Ahadith* and stories of *Sahabas* of the Holy Prophet[saw] which would keep us captivated. Mohsin Sahib always listened to concerns and would remember the conversation. He would follow up from the previous conversation and ask how are things since last time. If asked if he was praying for what I requested him earlier, he would nod his head and place his hand on my shoulder and give assurance.

In short, Mohsin Sahib abided by the *Khuddamul Ahmadiyya* pledge where he sacrificed his time, honor, wealth, and passion all for the cause of Allah and Ahmadiyyat, the true Islam. He helped the needy and orphans as well and raised many foster children. Mohsin Mahmud Sahib is survived by his wife, Fatima Mahmud Sahiba and four adopted children. He did not have children of his own. May God grant him lofty state in paradise and may his soul rest in peace, *Ameen.*

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OUR VERY DEAR BROTHER MOHSIN MAHMUD

Inamul Haq Kauser, Missionary West Midwest

On the 19th of October on the day of *Jumu'ah* our very dear Brother Mohsin Mahmud Sahib of New York passed away. *Innaa Lillahe wa Innaa ilahe Rajeoon*

He was vice president of New York *Jama'at* for 15 -16 years. He also had the privilege of being Secretary *Tabligh* New York for some years.

In 1958, he accepted Islam Ahmadiyyat through the efforts of Abdullah Sahib, President of the New York *Jama'at*. In 1984, when I was stationed in New York, by the Grace of Allah he was a very active member of the *Jama'at.* Thereafter, he had the opportunity to serve the *Jama'at* in a great manner.

Our brother Mohsin Mahmud Sahib was a devout worker in the New York *Jama'at.* He was regular in attending *Jumu'ah* Prayer. He had a great zeal in the field of *Tabligh* rather he had an obsession about *Tabligh* work. Whenever there was a *Tabligh* program, he would be a part of it. Whenever we had a book stall set up or a program to distribute literature, he was very excited to be a part of it. Despite old age, from morning till evening he would remain busy with us. In fact, many times, he purchased books from his pocket and distributed them to non Muslims and non Ahmadis.

I was teaching him the recitation of the Holy Qur'an at Bait-ul Zafar in 1989-1990 and he was coming very regularly for it.

He was an extremely patient and tolerant person. Intense humbleness was part of his character. He was very quiet by nature. He would show immense love to everyone. He would mingle with Pakistani Ahmadis as if was a Pakistani himself. In other words, he felt he was a member of one family. He would never have any complaints or accusations of any sorts. He in fact was a very jolly person and had humor in his nature. If a friend began to speak in Urdu or Punjabi, he would never mind and in fact would attentively listen to it. He would be smiling and laughing with them as if he understood every thing. That was his extra ordinary humility and love for others.

He had a strong love for *Khilafat* and the *Khalifa* of the time. He would consider it his duty to comply with every command of the Khalifatul Masih. Whenever he was told that this was an order or direction of Hazoor, he would act upon it immediately.

He had lots of love and respect for the Missionaries and would always address them with full respect and honor. In 1990, when I told him of my transfer to Los Angeles, he wept and was tearful. He said "I have seen many trials in my life, at every instance, I showed patience and even now I'll exhibit patience." At this time I was also very emotional. This was his extra ordinary love and attachment which he showed to me.

He was very regular in his five daily prayers. He was regularly attending *Jumu'ah* prayers regardless of wheather condition or his own health's condition. He was a regular attendee of local *Jama.'at Amila* meetings. In *Amila* meetings mostly he would remain silent but when he was asked for advice, his advice was very beneficial to all.

He was the best caretaker of the Mosque. He had been planting flowers and various other plants at Masjid Bait-ul-Zafar New York for its beautification all year around.

In 2005, when I asked him to join the scheme of *Wassiyyat* based on *Hazoor-e-Anwar's* directions. He asked "what will be my obligations". I replied you would have to contribute 10% of your income as *Chanda Wasiyyat.* He replied "I am already paying 20-25% of my income". So, then there's no problem. He applied for his *Wasiyyat* on June 21, 2005 which was accepted on Nov, 01, 2006 his *Wasiyyat* # was 53564 Thus, he entered the system of *Wassiyyat* and by the grace of Allah is now buried in the *Qitta-e-Musiyaan* with other "*Moosiyan*". Even though he was retired and living on his pension, still he would pay his *Chanda* very regularly and on time. Many times his *Chanda* contribution was the highest

in the New York Jama'at. He would eagerly take part in the contribution of *Waqf-e-Jadid* and *Tahrik-e-Jadid.* Just a few years back, on the request of National Secretary *Waqf-e-Jadid,* he contributed $10,000.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] talked very highly about Mohsin Mahmud Sahib in his Friday sermon on Nov, 2,2012 he remarked,

*"Mohsin Mahmud Sahib was an African-American Ahmadi who passed away at the age of 87 on 19 October. He took his Bai'at in 1958 and following his Bai'at he had to face many difficult situations which he endured with great resolve. *He had served as Sadr of NY Jama'at for fifteen years. He was passionate about Tabligh work. He was a man of high moral standards, was regular in his Salat and had a benevolent, loving, charitable nature. He was devoted to Khilafat and afforded great courtesy to missionaries. Each year he planted flowers at Baitul Zafar, NY and cared for them throughout the year. His financial giving was more than his capacity. When in 2005 Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih appealed tto he Jama'at to join the scheme of Wasiyyat in greater numbers, and Mohsin Sahib was approached locally, he asked what the obligations were. When explained that it required giving one tenth of one's income he remarked that he already gave twenty to twenty five percent of his income. Yet, in obedience of the appeal of the Khalifa of the time, he promptly joined the scheme of Wasiyyat. In spite of being a retired individual, his chanda would be more than many.*

May God forgive both the deceased (Fazlur Rahman Sahib and Mohsin Mahmud Sahib) and grant them Paradise and high station. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih asked for prayers for the family of Mohsin Sahib and Fazlul Rahman Sahib to remain firm in their connection with the Jama'at."

Our dear Mohsin by the Grace of God was an exemplary Ahmadi. He is deserving of our special prayers. May Allah *Ta'ala* grant him forgiveness and bestow on him mercy and exalt his status in *Jannat-ul-Firdaus* and include him among His beloved ones. *Ameen.*

His wife Fatima Haneef Sahiba had also been sick since many years and Mohsin Mahmud Sahib used to take very good care of her. This sister of ours is a great poet. She is a devout and righteous woman. She takes an eager part in *Jama'at* activities. May Allah grant her solace and fortitude and grant her a long and healthy life. *Ameen.*

*He had served as *Na'ib* Sadr (Vice President) of NY *Jama'at* for fifteen years.

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HUMANITY FIRST

NEEDS

VOLUNTEERS AND

FINANCIAL HELP

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HADITH

Hadhrat 'Abdur Rahman bin 'Amr Al-Sulami[ra] relates that he heard 'Irbad bin Sariyah say that once the Messenger[saw] of Allah delivered such an address that it brought tears to their eyes and frightened the hearts. We said: "O Messenger[saw] of Allah! This seems to be the farewell exhortation. Therefore, make a will for us. Whereupon he said: 'I am leaving you on a bright and shining path. Its night is like its day. After me, no one can go astray except an unfortunate person. Those of you who live long enough will see a lot of discord. You must then follow my *Sunnah* and the way of *Khulafa-e-Rashidin Al-Mahdiyyin* (The Guided Leaders). Obey your leader even if he is a slave from Abyssinia. Hold it fast with your hind teeth. A believer is like a camel who moves in whichever direction it is moved (and has the habit of obeying).' "

(Musnad Ahmad, juz 4, p 126, Abu-Dawud kitabul sunnah bab fi lazumul sunnah)

Hadhrat Ibn 'Umar[ra] relates that he heard the Messenger[saw] of Allah say: "The one who starts to disobey will find no argument, in his favor when he meets Allah on the Day of Judgment; and the one who dies without taking an oath of allegiance (to the leader of his time), dies the death of ignorance."

According to another tradition, the one who left the *Jama'at* will die the death of ignorance.

(Muslim kitabul imarah bab al-amr bilazumul jma'ah 'inda zahurul fitn)

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A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO MOHSIN MAHMUD SAHIB'S Life

Missionary Ehtishamul Haq Mahmood Kauser

The life of this noble one is not mysterious to the author of this dissertation. The most prominent example of his character that can be noted is his most warm and wholehearted greeting. Even at his extreme age he would embrace all with a warm hug pulling their bodies closest to his heart to such an extent that you could experience every drumming beat. He would draw his face as close as possible to your cheeks and greet you with the most welcoming greeting that leaves you for hours dazzled and amazed. In every situation including the very first instance that this humble one met Mohsin Mahmud, he would always make an extra effort to leave you with some sort of connection with him, for example the very first instance Mohsin Mahmud asked "What is your name" and when realizing that it was similar to his own quickly said "Mahmud is meeting Mahmud". It is with this loving example that the life of this righteous soul is presented.

Not only did he embrace Islam wholeheartedly and meet his fellow brothers with much love but also sacrificed his everything for the sake of Islam. Inamul Haq Kauser, missionary of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community commissioned in New York City from 1984-1990, states that among those who sacrificed financially for the cause of Islam and its propagation, Mohsin Mahmud was among those who were the top contributors to the cause of Islam at times even more than Doctors. (He worked in the New York City Sanitation Department).

In the magazine published by an auxiliary of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, *Ansarullah* called Al-Nahl, Mohsin Mahmud has described his life and struggles in his own words. He begins with a basic background of his life and his childhood mentioning that he was born in 1928 and was the seventh of eight children. He mentions about his parents that they were from Barbados. He further states, "but due to family problems and economics, I was orphaned at age 3. From the age of 3 to 18, I lived in foster homes. I stayed the longest with Ms. Gladden, one of my foster parents. I stayed with her from 3 to 4 years. She had a son about my age and a grand daughter who lived in Richmond, Virginia." Concerning his parents he states that they "were Protestants and I guess Ms. Gladden was too. I cannot say exactly what denomination my foster parents were and at the age I was during this time, it really did not matter a lot. As a foster child you just did what you were told, and tried to stay out of trouble, especially if you had a good foster home."

Mohsin Mahmud later joined the U.S. Army in 1944 during World War II and was serving as a cook in New Orleans. He was able to visit New Guinea and the Philippines during his time in the army. He mentions his life after the army in the following words, "I stayed with my brother and mother on 112th street in Harlem. I became employed in the hospital as a porter, and later having passed a civil service test, worked with the Department of Sanitation for about 34 years. During this time, I had married and had two children."

Describing his life in New York as a special time, a "period of Renaissance" since the Nation of Islam had begun to spring up and personalities such as Malcolm X began their journey of popularity. Mentioning his first interaction with Islam he states,

"There was a Jazz musician most popularly known as Art Blakey, whose Muslim name was 'Abdullah Bin Hannah. He was a drummer, and lived with his wife Zainab on 117th Street between 5th and Lenox. When he was in town he used to hold meetings at his place. These meetings were informal discussions that revolved around various themes. The one that hooked me was "Who are You?" As this question caused me to look inside of myself to find out who I was, I became actively involved in these discussions. Eventually, I came to realize that my roots

were from Africa and Islām. 'Abdullah was an Aḥmadī Muslim and was also the President of the New York Aḥmadiyyah Muslim *Jamā'at* at the time. Back then there were not a lot of foreign Muslims, and Aḥmadiyyat was not very controversial. Islām, however, was controversial, as it seemed to be the religion of the Renaissance movement. I mean people were searching out their past, seeking their identity and Islam was it! Islam suddenly seemed to be a powerful source. The underlying message was to declare to oneself that one individual could make a difference in helping the Black people. People saw the message of Islām as revolutionary."

He further says concerning his own interaction with Islam and what caused him to be pulled towards Islam, "I saw the answers to my curiosity in Islām. At last, on the urging of 'Abdullāh, I accepted Aḥmadiyyat, the true Islām... The mission house at that time was in a loft on 116th Street between Lexington and 7th Ave. Missionary Ghulām Yāsīn was the Aḥmadiyyah missionary." A very close friend, Abid Haneef Sahib relates how Moshin Mahmud Sahib and himself would go to the streets of Manhattan to propagate the message of Islam. He relates that

"We realized that we had to go out and teach the Quran and occasionally quote it, so Mohsin Mahmud and myself, we used to go to Mount Morris Park, in New York in Manhattan (now known as Marcus Garvey Park), that was ultimately in those years where the chess players lived, and they would put the tables out and they would be playing chess there, and Moshin and I would go there...we would read at the top of our voices because we knew nobody could hear us, and we were modeling on the famous Roman Orator who used to go out to the sea and used to deliver his declamations to the seas and the waves. It helped later on when we went to times square."

Mahmud Sahib mentions that the members that joined Islam Ahmadiyya at that time were musicians and although they were active members the missionary admonished them to find suitable occupations. He states, "At that time a large number of African American musicians were Aḥmadīs, such as Ḥassan Ḥakīm, Ḥalīm Rashīd, Ṣāḥib Shahad, McKoy Tyner and others would come to the mission house when they were in town and especially on Jumu'ah or Friday for prayers. However some would soon fade away as the missionary admonished them to find suitable occupations, as the money from their occupations was not acceptable, that of playing music in bars where their profession was promoting all sorts of unacceptable behavior. To some of them, however, the attraction to Islām was so strong that gradually they had to make the change and eventually became very good members of the Aḥmadiyyah Community." Mahmud Sahib mentions that the times were tough and some members "through misunderstanding [s]...dropped out of the Ahmadiyya Muslim *Jama'at*" but still a few remained. Mahmud Sahib was among those few fortunate ones who had the opportunity to meet such personages as Muḥammad Zafrulla Khan Sahib[ra] and 'Abdul Qadir Zaigham. In conclusion Mohsin Mahmud Sahib says, "I hope that it has become clear that

I came into Aḥmadiyyat because it was the True Islām. All the people, who were intellectually motivated, nationally motivated and spiritually motivated, were all Ahmadī Muslims, and they became my mentors, my tutors, and my friends. I pray for them and I thank Allāh for bringing these people in my life. I will always be grateful to them for the path they showed me, *Al-Ḥamdu Lillāhi Rabbil-'Ālamīn.*" Mohsin Mahmud was residing in Queens, NY area until his death and had been recognized by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community by receiving an award that highlighted a lifetime of commitment, entitled, Mufti Muhammad Sadiq Lifetime Commitment Award. All of those who have ever come in contact with him and his wife have been touched down to the core of their lives, and they are ever grateful for the positive change that came about by simply meeting Mohsin Mahmud.

An Interview conducted under the guidance of President of New York

City Jama'at, Nazir Ayaz Sahib on January 3, 2012

Background

Born in Harlem, 1928.
Accepted Ahmadiyyat in 1958.

How he converted to Islam

Brother Mohsin Mahmud was introduced to Islam and Ahmadiyyat by a number of friends who were musicians (Art Blakely, Abdullah) in Harlem during the 1950s.They gave him a book called "Life of Muhammad" which really appealed to him. The idea of peace and loving humanity deeply resonated with him.

As a foster child since the age of 3, he lived in several different homes and was separated from his family until the age of 19 when he joined the army to fight WW2. He was stationed in the Philippines and guarded Filipino prisoners of war who were the same age as him. He was "just a kid" and didn't 'hate' the enemy.

Ahmadiyyat gave him a sense of purpose, which he had been seeking throughout his years adrift in the foster care system and his time at war.

He eventually met missionaries Ghulam Yasin, who served as NY Jamaat President from 1947 to 1956 and lived/worked in a old brownstone in Harlem. They taught him more about Islam and Ahmadiyyat. At that time, the NY jamaat consisted of less than 40 people. (30 men, 10 women).

Changing his name

Changed his name from Louis to Mohsin Mahmud. He was well-liked and respected at work and although changing his faith and his name presented challenges at times, he says he "won respect by demanding it in a respectful manner". Although he was afraid of a backlash, changing his name was empowering. One of his bosses at the time, Mrs. Birch, even called a meeting, letting everyone know that he had changed his name and wished to be called Mohsin Mahmud from now on and therefore everyone would need to abide by his wishes. She even told them "if you can't get along with Mohsin, you can't get along with anybody."

Tabligh

Major emphasis from the get-go

After accepting Ahmadiyyat, Brother Mohsin Mahmud was devoted to spreading the message of love and peace that Ahmadiyyat embodies. He, along with the few members of the *Jama'at* during the late 1950s, chipped in enough money to buy a manual copier. Unlike modern photocopiers, these machines did not spit out hundreds of copies at the touch of a button. Members of the *Jama'at* would manually crank out copies of flyers, pamphlets and books after typing up whichever document they wanted to distribute.

Armed with literature about Islam, a passionate few, including Muhammad Rafi, Abid Hanif (father of American missionary Azhar Hanif) and Muhammad Sadiq, would head to Times Square. It was the 1950s and racism was rampant but that did not deter these devoted men. They would haul a ladder to the heart of NYC, climb to the top and boldly declare "Jesus didn't die on the cross!" or "The Messiah has come." On one such occasion, the three men were arrested and spent the night in jail. (MM Couldn't remember exactly what they were charged with, but I found this quote in a old *Jama'at* newsletter about the incident:

"Abid Hanif also remembers the confrontation with Billy Graham. It may be recalled that during Billy Graham's visit to Kenya he was challenged by Late Sheikh Mubarak Ahmad Sahib, who was Amir and Missionary In charge in East Africa at that time. Brother Abid Hanif, Brother Bashir Afzal and Brother M. Sadiq had put up banners and distributed pamphlets outside the Madison Square Garden, where Billy Graham was holding a meeting. Police attacked and arrested the three of them and they had to spend the night in lockup. They got suspended sentences and were later acquitted."

Brother Mohsin helped bail them out of jail. (I have no confirmed the above passage with Brother Mohsin.)

Meeting Hadhrat Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan Sahib[ra]

As the President of the UN General Assembly and Pakistan's permanent representative, Hadhrat Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan Sahibra visited NYC on many occasions. He would stay with the then President of the *Jama'at,* Muhammad Sadiq in New Jersey.

Brother Mohsin would meet him on several occasions and once accompanied him to a *Nikah* Ceremony. Brother Mohsin fondly remembers those visits, recalling that Hadhrat Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan Sahib "loved his brothers."

Experience with Khilafat

Mohsin Mahmud fondly remembers the honor of meeting a *Khalifa* for the first time in 1976 in New Jersey when Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih III Mirza Nasir Ahmad Sahib[rh] was visiting. He was kind and affectionate and the opportunity to meet him was very rewarding.

Another major aspect of Brother Mohsin's life was directly impacted by Hadhrat Khilafatul Masih IV. Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad Sahib[rh] played a huge role in brother Mohsin's marriage with Sister Fatima Hanif Sahiba after she visited London in the mid -1990s.

Thoughts on keeping new converts active in Jama'at:

Give them responsibilities within the Jama'at to give them a sense of belonging and fulfillment.

Brother Mohsin's advice to young Ahmadis

Be honest with yourself. Seek the truth and invest in knowledge. Are you really satisfied? Surround yourself with people who are trying to pursue a purpose in life. Embody the spirit of Islam and look to see that you are taking part in the peace making process. Always be a source of love and peace.

On both an individual and *Jama'at* level, we need to do more. We need to change our selves in order to change the world. We must do more *Tabligh* and above all, we must pray. Find your strength and contribute.

Fighting Islamaphobia

Islam is a very positive religion. If you want other people to embrace Islam, become a living example of this faith. The most important thing is how you change yourself. Be confident and don't be afraid to be different.

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HADITH

Hadhrat Ibn 'Abbas[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said: "If a person experiences something unpleasant at the hands of a ruler he should bear it with patience, for whoever departs from the *Jama'at* (community) even a hand's breadth will die the death of ignorance."

(Bukhari kitabul fitn bab qaulannabi[sa] sastrun ba'di amuran)

Department of Rishta Nata

www.Rishtanata.us

Nikah Announcements

The Department of *Rishta Nata* would like to congratulate the following couples on the their *Nikah:*

1. Nasiruddeen Ahmad Tariq Sahib S/O Iftikhar Hussain Tariq Sahib of South Virgina Jama'at and Lubna Roohi Malik Sahiba D/O Nasir Mahmood Mailk Sahib of Los Angeles West *Jama'at.* Their Nikah was announced on July 31, 2012 by Maulana Naseem Mahdi Sahib in the blessed presence of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] and the *Rukhsati* took place on Nov 3, 2012 in Los Angeles, *Alhamdo lillah.*

2. Missionary Ehtishamul Haq Kauser Sahib S/O Inamul Haq Kauser Sahib of Chicago West *Jama'at* and Samreen Tariq Ahmad Sahiba D/O Wadood Tariq Ahmad Sahib of Milwaukee *Jama'at.* The *Nikah* was announced by Hadhrat Ameerul Momineen[aba] in London on September 10, 2012, *Alhamdo lillah.*

Members are requested to pray that Allah, the Almighty, may shower His immense blessings on the couples and their families, *Ameen.*

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HUMANITY FIRST USA GIFT OF SIGHT 2012 EYE CAMP REPORT

Ahsan M. Khan

By the Grace of Allah, the third eye camp in Guatemala took place under the Gift of Sight initiative of Humanity First USA from October 13-21st, 2012. The camp was held at Proyecto Salud y Paz (translates into "Project Health and Peace") in Chichicastenango, some 150 km outside of Guatemala City. Salud y Paz is a small rural clinic built several years ago by a local philanthropist. The patients served by this clinic are a mix of local Guatemalans and Mayans who lack access to basic medical care and who represent the poorest socioeconomic sectors of the surrounding area. This was the second visit by the Gift of Sight team to this clinic.

David Gonzalez, Director of Humanity First Guatemala, worked tirelessly for several months to prepare for our camp, and was supported by his team, which included Amir and Missionary Sahib Guatemala, Abdul Sattar Khan, as well as Aliya Latif and Saifra Khan.

This year's Gift of Sight team included Dr. Charles Bouchard (Chairman of Ophthalmology, Loyola University Chicago), Dr. Hajirah Saeed (ophthalmology resident, Loyola), Dr. Ali Djalilian (Professor, University of Illinois-Chicago), Dr. Amir Mehralian (Corneal Fellow, University of Illinois-Chicago), Dr. Saqib Ali (Anesthesiologist from Cleveland), Dr. Tahir Khan (LA Inland), Saifra Khan (Photographer from Chicago, *Jama'at*), Mohammad Arslan Khalid (Chicago East), Kashif Malik (Phoenix), Harris Ahmed (LA Inland), Abdus Salam Khan (LA Inland), Syed Nawas Ahmad (LA East), Terez Varkonyi (Philadelphia), Juan Nunez (an ophthalmic tech from LA), and Jennifer Nunez (LA). Aysha Rahman Alburaki (LA East/ Quebec) is Assistant Director of Gift of Sight and coordinated the mission trip again this year. Dr. Ahsan Khan (LA East) is the Director of Gift of Sight and organized the mission.

The Guatemalan *Jama'at*, including Margarita Asensio, Mario Gonzalez, Luis Boche and Faiz Ahmed Qureshi, provided additional local support in Guatemala.

Weekly conference calls were arranged leading up to the mission. Aysha Rahman Alburaki was project coordinator and facilitated communication between team members, flight arrangements and travel logistics, volunteer forms, and collection of travel/housing funds, among other things. David Gonzalez and Saifra Khan were in constant communication with the team to ensure the clinic was appropriately set up in Guatemala. All planning was done under the oversight of Munum Naeem Sahib (Chairman, HF USA) and Dr. Naeem Lughmani (Medical Director, HF USA).

David Gonzalez arranged a triage clinic at Salud y Paz a few weeks prior to the camp. HF Guatemala was able to recruit 4 ophthalmologists from IPC in Guatemala to evaluation patients. Several hundred patients were screened and assigned to return to our camp for cataract and pterygium surgery.

Several ophthalmic companies donated eye medications and supplies to support our effort, including Abbott Labs/Advanced Medical Optics, Alcon Labs, Allergan, and Bausch & Lomb. Lions Club International donated 400 pairs of prescription eyeglasses.

HFUSA created a Gift of Sight webpage with an online donation system. In addition, many team members created personal webpages through First Giving and many raised substantial funds to cover the cost of travel, food and accommodations. A successful fundraiser, Night for Sight 2012, was held in Chicago in May and raised substantial donations to cover the expenses of the trip.

The team spent the first day setting up the operating rooms and clinic. Humanity First banners were set up throughout the clinic. Many members of the clinic were given HF T-shirts, and coloring books and crayons were provided to the many children who visited the clinic throughout the week.

In all, 45 surgeries were performed during the week. There were no surgical complications on any patients, *Alhumdolillah*. All surgical

patients were examined the following morning by the surgeons. Mayan patients were given instructions through a Quichean interpreter. All patients received antibiotic and anti-inflammatory drops (brought by the GoS team) and given appointments for the following week (to be seen by the Guatemalan residents). Dr. Saqib administered anesthesia for all patients. All of the volunteers on the team were able to observe surgery. The local Guatemalan ophthalmology residents were taught new surgical techniques.

Saifra Khan was the official photographer for the trip. A photo blog was set up:

(www.hfguatemala.tumblr.com)

and linked to the HF website. Like the prior 2 years, a video documentary of the trip is being prepared.

On the final day, inventory was taken, all supplies were reboxed and packed and delivered to the mosque storage facility in Mixco, Guatemala. Several medications were left in the clinic for the residents to give to post-op patients. A patient registry and log was created and provided to the Guatemalan residents for follow-up. The host physicians and staff of the clinic prepared a banquet style farewell lunch for the entire team.

On Friday, the team departed from Chichicastenango and participated in Friday Prayers at Baitul Awal near Guatemala City. Later, the Guatemalan Ophthalmological Society hosted the Gift of Sight team for an educational symposium in Guatemala City. Over 90 people, including several ophthalmologists, attended the event. Dr. Charles Bouchard and Dr. Ahsan Khan delivered medical lectures on new innovations in eye surgery. A brief introduction to Humanity First and its efforts in Guatemala was also presented. The society recognized Humanity First for their volunteer efforts and provided David Gonzalez with a recognition award. A formal farewell dinner reception hosted by HF Guatemala and Amir Sahib was held in Antigua, followed by a team meeting at the hotel where all members had the opportunity to review their experiences.

Alhumdolillah all team members returned to the U.S. safely and in good health.

We look forward to the 4th annual Gift of Sight mission to Guatemala in 2013, *Insha Allah.*

The Gift of Sight team is grateful to the administration of Humanity First, under the direction of Munum Naeem, for their support and oversight.

Earnest prayers are requested that may Allah accept all our humble sacrifices in the service of humanity.

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HUMANITY FIRST

NEEDS

VOLUNTEERS AND

FINANCIAL HELP

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HADITH

Hadhrat Abu Nadrah[ra] relates that a person who had listened to the address of the Messenger[saw] of Allah delivered in the middle of the days of *Al-Tashriq* - the Brightness (11, 12 and 13 of *Dhul Hijja*) in Mina, told me that he[saw] said, "O People, Beware! Your Allah is One. Your father is one. Beware! An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab; neither a white (the red) over a black, nor a black over a white except by the righteousness (on merit). 'Did I convey the message?' They said, 'The Messenger[saw] of Allah has conveyed the message excellently.' Then he[saw] asked, 'What day is it?' They replied, 'It is the sacred day.' Then he[saw] asked, 'What month is it?' They replied, 'It is the sacred month.' Then he[saw] asked, 'What city is it?' They replied, 'It is the sacred city.' Then he[saw] said, 'Allah has made sacred between you, your lives and your goods (the narrator does not recall whether he[saw] also said 'your city' or not) as sacred as this day, this month, and this city is sacred.' Then he[saw] asked, 'Did I convey the message?' They said, 'The Messenger[saw] of Allah has conveyed (the whole message excellently).' Then he[saw] said, 'Those listening should convey to those who are not here.' "

(Musnad Ahmad, p 411/5, Musnad Ahmad p 230/1 'an Ibni 'Abbas[ra])

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PAY ZAKAT

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INTERFAITH EVENT – SILICON VALLEY CAPTER

Waseem Malik

On Sunday November 4th 2012, the Silicon Valley *Jama'at* co-hosted an interfaith event with the First Unitarian Church of San Jose and the Sikh Gurdwara of San Jose. Entitled ***"Teachers of Peace / Victims of Violence? A Conversation with Muslims, Sikhs, and Unitarian Universalists,"*** the interfaith seminar was arranged in the wake of the recent killings in a Sikh Gurdwara in Wisconsin; the surge of violence in the Middle East in response to an outrage-inducing film about the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw]; and the shootings in a Unitarian Universalist sanctuary in Tennessee a few years ago. As noted by *Imam* Mubasher Ahmad Sahib, Regional Missionary - Northern California, all these senseless and indeed heartbreaking events that resulted in loss of human lives call for the building of peaceful community based on mutual understanding, compassion, and respect.

Welcoming an audience of some 150 people, Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones, Senior Minister, First Unitarian Church of San Jose reflected that "on this special Sunday, representatives of three sometimes-misunderstood religions – Ahmadiyya Muslims, Sikhs, and Unitarian Universalists – gather to share a meal and explore the stories and teachings of their faith leaders regarding love, unity, and peace." She reminded the audience that each of these communities has been hurt by violence and they come together in kinship inviting others as well to embrace the spirit of kinship, empathy and mutual respect.

In his opening remarks following a pot-luck lunch in which members of the three communities and other guests intermingled, *Na'ib Ameer* Wasim Malik Sahib welcomed the audience and heralded the spirit of togetherness and understanding that had served as the basis for the event. *Na'ib Ameer* Sahib gave a brief background on the history of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and the Promised Messiah[as] and also highlighted the *Jama'at's* role in promoting interfaith harmony and understanding, as well as the *Jama'at's* efforts and attention towards serving humanity globally irrespective of religious differences.

The next segment of the day's program comprised of an offering of prayers from each faith. Two young members of the Silicon Valley *Jama'at*, brother and sister, Asher Jamil and Bashire Jamil recited *Surah Fatiha* and read the translation respectively. This was followed from a prayer by Respected Manmohan Singh from the Sikh Gurduwara and a prayer "Spirit of Life" by Rev. Nancy.

There were three short speeches made by the respective leaders of the three faiths. Rev. Nancy provided a brief background to the Unitarian beliefs highlighting that the Unitarian's believed that the Prophet Jesus[as] was the "son of God" in the sense that he was a reflection of the attributes of God, rather than being a part of the Trinity. She mentioned the efforts and example of the Honorable Theodore Parker, a leader and minister of the Unitarian Church, in striving for the protection of other communities and victims of persecution and bigotry and how he had taken up arms to protect some slaves who had sought refuge in his house.

Honorable Bhupinda Singh gave an introduction to the Sikh faith. The word "Sikh", he told the audience, means learner and as a follower of the Sikh faith, one strives to learn to achieve a sense of internal and external peace; something that can only be attained when one is at peace with one's fellow beings. He recalled the recent attack on the Sikh Gurduwara in Wisconsin and underscored the Sikh community's efforts in promoting welfare, including their participation in relief efforts in connection with the earthquake in Haiti.

Imam Mubasher Sahib began his comments by explaining the concept of peace in Islam; the peace that emanates from the surrendering of one's ego to the importance of establishing peace in society. He highlighted the emphasis that Islam places on safeguarding other people's lives, property and freedom of conscience irrespective of their faith, color or creed. *Imam* Mubasher referenced the

verse of the Holy Qur'an where we are cautioned and reminded that whoever kills an innocent, it is as if he has killed all mankind; and whoever saves a person, it is as if he has saved all mankind. *Imam* Mubasher also highlighted the concept of the Unity of God and how this should be reflected through the unity of mankind. Islam also emphasizes the concepts of justice for all as well as mercy, and these are best embodied by the excellent personal conduct of the Holy Prophet[saw]. While there are numerous accounts of the Holy Prophet[saw] in this respect, a hallmark is the Charter of Medina which was centered upon the concept of religious freedom and equality. The Holy Prophet[saw] not only legally protected, but in a wonderful expression of forgiveness and suppression of one's ego, through the Charter provided an example for all mankind on the safeguarding of human rights, the sanctity of all places of worship and respect for all religious leaders, together with the perfect demonstration of compassion.

The panel discussion ended with a brief question-and-answer session. Comments were made by members of the audience on the importance of continuing to have such interfaith forums as well as on the commonalities among faiths.

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HUMANITY FIRST NEEDS VOLUNTEERS AND FINANCIAL HELP

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MIAMI DADE COUNTY BOOK FAIR

Dr. Fazal Ahmed, In Charge, National Exhibitions, US Jama'at.

Miami Dade County Book Fair was held on the campus of Miami Dade County Community College Campus from Nov 16 to Nov 18 2012. It was very well planned. Our *Jama'at's* literature was ornately laid out against the background of newly printed exhibits. There were three sections: 1) The Holy Qur'an section; 2) Section of the Life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him; 3) General literature of the *Jama'at.* Free gifts included brochure and pamphlets, bookmarks, CDs, DVDs, flyers, gift bags, water bottles and other cute stuff.

The book stall attracted thousands of visitors - from students to scholars; travelers and pilgrims, writers, reporters, authors, critics; evangelists and military officers. There was never a dull moment. The hosts were on their toes all the time – answering questions, taking orders, notes, conversing in Spanish, English, Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, Hindi, sometime a bit of Arabic; selling; presenting arguments and doing what they did best of all – educating the public on Islam, removing fallacies and even gross misconceptions. Brothers and Sisters, *Lajna, Ansars, Khuddams, Tifl* and *Nasiraat* – everyone was busy like a bee. But the sweetness was overflowing all over the bookstall. Besides English, people asked for lots of literature in Spanish, following by French and Portuguese.

The Miami *Jama'at* was host to guests from the Center, headed by *Imam* Naseem Mahdi. Each day was busier than the previous one. Even when the darkness settled, the visitors to our bookstall did not want to leave. Food was plenty and so was friendliness. It was love for all, hatred for none- actually this was the most favorite bookmark gift that every visitor took. The generosity, hospitality and love that flowed from the President of the *Jama'at* right down to the youngest *tifl* was heart warming. *Masha Allah. Mubarak Allaho lakum.*

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Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said: "While walking on a pathway, a man came across a thorny branch and removed it. Allah appreciated it and forgave him."

(Tirmidhi bab ma ja' imatatul adha 'anittariq, Bukhari kitabul muzali bab akhadhal ghusn wa ma yudhinnas fittariq farami bih)

SYNOPSIS OF INTERFAITH SYMPOSIUM

Alishba Jamil, Minnesota Chapter

The Minnesota Interfaith Open Forum (MIOF) held its second interfaith symposium of the year on July 15th 2012. The MIOF is collaboration between Hindu, Jewish, Christian and Muslim speakers of Minnesota, where the Ahmadiyya Minnesota Chapter represents the Muslims. The second symposium was organized by the Hindu community at their Temple and speakers from all faiths presented their views on the topic, *The purpose of life and Human existence.* There was representation from the faith traditions from Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity in this symposium.

Rev. Steve Hagen, who represented the Buddha faith, started quoting his own example that he began to search the purpose of life at an early age when his father passed away. The incident opened his mind and he began to search for the truth. He began looking at various religions and philosophies until he came across a Buddha teaching. The story describes a painful situation of a man who has been shot by an arrow and how this incident helped him learn to focus on the important things in life. Rev. Hagen further elaborated that in today's world there is a lot of confusion, doubt and ignorance that it is making it difficult for a person to gain focus and search for the truth. He concluded that the determination of life is to go through your own experiences and gain knowledge to search for the truth.

Dr. Sashi Sane, who represented the Hindu faith, explained that reincarnation brings different purposes for an individual's life. For example, if one performed good deeds in the previous life, that individual would be rewarded in the next life. He explained that for Hindus, there are four main goals of life: to fulfill their personal duties and moral obligations, to ensure security by material wealth, to enjoy the worldly pleasures known as karma, and ultimately liberation known as motion. Dr. Sane specified that above all these goals, there is even an important goal, and that is to obtain knowledge. With positive attitude, high spirituality and divine grace, education slowly enables a person to achieve success in the forms of material wealth, prosperity or even fame and power. He further elaborated that gaining in material wealth is primarily to insure security for an individual or for their family and that every Hindu is free to enjoy the worldly pleasures as long as they fulfill their moral obligations first, to the best of their abilities. These duties could pertain to oneself, one's spouse, their family, their community and to their country, and are based upon one's state in life. Dr. Sashi concluded that the true purpose of existence for a Hindu is further liberation, which is awakening the power of the will from the never ending cycle of birth and death.

The third speaker was Mr. Nasir Shams representing the Islamic faith on behalf of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. He explained that according to the Islamic faith, there are two main purposes to life and human existence. First, to know and understand God, and second, to establish a living and loving relationship with God because one cannot fulfill one without the other. Mr. Shams mentioned that knowing God can be difficult, especially in our society today where we hear of so many different accounts of so many different religions that in some way or another, may all be true. He suggested that all faiths could each be holding a piece to the same puzzle which when put together, derives a holistic view of just who God is, which is exactly the Islamic perspective. Mr. Shams explained a Persian analogy of 7 holy men; each representing 7 different faiths, were blind folded and asked to describe an object in a darkly lit room one by one. Each of them described something different and eventually they all started arguing who was right and wrong until a man came to them and took their blind folds off. This man lit the room to show them that they were all describing the same object and that each of them was describing the object according to their own experiences. Mr. Shams explained that this is the Islamic perspective of God, that all faiths are describing the same God even if they call Him with different names, people describe Him according to their own experiences. He told the audience that one of the things that the Holy Qur'an asks people to do is to reflect upon the attributes of God because that's one of the ways to

understand your creator by looking at his creations. Mr. Shams also elaborated that science and religion are expressions of truth so they should always be in an agreement with each other and if they are not, it means that we, humans have failed to understand the big picture. There is always a deeper underlying spiritual message that God is trying to convey to us just by looking at the universe and His creations. For human life to exist, the brain and the heart must work in conjunction with each other in order for the body to have physical life. If one part is not working then the human body is physically dead. Similarly, the spiritual body also has two main parts, the mind which deals with logic and the heart which feels the love. In order to acquire spiritual life, both the mind and the heart must be working in conjunction with each other. Mr. Shams concluded that God has created everything with a purpose and if we want to understand Him, then we have to understand ourselves.

Pastor Sara, representing the Christian faith explained that a Christian's purpose of life is to serve God and advance in His reign because humans are granted with the capacity, intelligence and talent to serve Him. She stated that if humans truly love God, then they must show that by learning to love and forgive one another because this reflects some of the qualities of God. In the Christian perspective, life is a gift given from God and people should spend their life towards advancing in God's reign. Pastor Sara went on to say that because humans have a natural habit of being sinful and rebellious, Jesus was sent to show people how to live life by loving God and loving one another. Pastor Sara summarized that the main goal of a Christian is to express some of the perfection of the presence of God and the way Jesus led his life. Finally, she concluded that a Christian does not have to work to secure salvation because it was God's righteousness towards the Christians that freed them from their sins. This gave Christians the purpose of life by presenting an opportunity to give thanks to what God did for them.

The symposium was concluded with an active question and answer session followed by a social hour. About 120 individuals participated in the symposium

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HADITH

Hadhrat Abu Darda'[ra] relates that he heard the Messenger[sa] of Allah say: Whosoever travels to seek knowledge, Allah eases the way to Paradise for him. The Angels spread their wings on the seeker of knowledge in appreciation of his action. All that is in the Heavens and the earth, including the fish in the water, ask for forgiveness for a scholar. A scholar is superior to a worshipper as the moon is superior to all the planets. The scholars are heirs of the Prophets and the Prophets did not leave an inheritance of *Dirhams* and *Dina-rs* but left behind only knowledge. He who acquires it, acquires a vast portion."

(Tirmidhi kitabul 'ilm bab fi fadlul fiqah)

HADITH

Hadhrat Anas[ra] relates that the Messenger[sa] of Allah said: "I have been commanded by Allah that I keep on striving with the people till they bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is His servant and His messenger and that they face the direction we face, and they eat our slaughtered animals and they pray according to our Prayer. Once they do this, their lives and their properties will become sacred for us except when and where the law allows it. They will have the same rights as the Muslims have and will be under the same obligations as the Muslims are."

(Abu Dawud kitabul jihad bab 'alama yuqatilul mushrikun)

Hadhrat Anas[ra] bin Malik relates that the Messenger[saw] of Allah said: "Anyone who offers Prayer as we do facing the direction we face and eats our slaughtered animals, is a Muslim, who is under the protection of Allah and the Messenger[saw] of Allah. Therefore, betray not Allah regarding His Protection (for him)."

(Bukhari kitabussalat bab fadl istiqbalil qiblah)

Hadhrat Abu Dharr[ra] says that the Messenger[saw] of Allah said: "None of you should call another a wicked person or a disbeliever as the accusation will revert to him (the accuser) if his companion (the accused) is not as accused (is innocent)."

(Bukhari kitabul adab bab ma yanhaminssababilla'an)

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EXISTENSE OF GOD

Faizan Ahmed, Lexington KY

When we hear the word "God," what is the first thing that comes to our minds? Do we think about Allah, the blessings which he has bestowed upon us, or do we admire his most magnificent creations such as the Earth or even the universe as a whole? The reality in the modern world is that when people hear the word "God," most of their minds end up being clueless and blank because of the lack of intellectual knowledge they possess about who God truly is.

Throughout my childhood I have moved a lot with my parents. I have moved from Pakistan to England then from England to the USA. Even when I came to the USA with my parents, we still moved all around the eastern part of the USA. Despite the constant traveling my family endured, we still managed to keep a key relationship with us no matter where we went. This relationship was the relationship we had with the local as well as the UK *Jama'at.* When my Dad found a permanent job, we, as well as other people established a small *Jama'at* that met once a month to discuss religious topics and maintain a strong faith in Ahmadiyyat as well in God. During the beginning of these monthly sessions, I had lots of fun meeting with different people and making friends with other children. But the thing that I did not realize was the true importance of the monthly meetings we had. After a few years, I realized that the true significance of these meetings was not to socialize or have fun but it was to truly develop an understanding of God and establish a strong and fundamental relationship with him. When I realized this, I started to actively participate in the *Jama'at* talking sessions in order to gain more knowledge of Islam as well as the outside world. During these sessions, I always pondered about what the modern take on society was about God. After a while of studying, I realized that most modern people are Christians, Muslims, or even Jews by name but not by heart. In reality, these people did not even believe in the existence of God due to the changing idea of religion and irrational arguments against the existence of God that are rising in parts of the world. After learning this, I asked myself whether I truly believed in the existence of God and whether I had the faith in my heart to believe that God was a part of my everyday life and was the reason for my existence. After asking myself this, I found the importance of believing in the existence of God and finding the faith that is concealed in our hearts in order to fully accept the idea and existence of the almighty God.

Atheistic Arguments

In order to fully understand the existence of God, it's also important to understand why people don't believe in God. In order to study this, we can look at Atheists. Atheists are people who deny the existence of God. Under Atheism, there are three kinds of Atheists. The first kind are the kinds of Atheists that do not believe in God because they do not find any convincing evidence to prove his existence. This is the majority of Atheists and make up over 90% of Atheism. The second kind of Atheists believe that the existence of God cannot be proved through reason. The third kind positively deny the existence of God and claim that they can prove his non-existence through arguments. This makes up only 5% of Atheists. Atheists present many arguments but they all relate to two major ones. The first argument that they pose is that if God created the world then who created God. The second argument that they pose is that the law of nature cannot be created by God because it sometimes acts blindly and with great cruelty.

First, we will examine the first argument that if the Earth is created by God then someone must have created God. The interesting thing about this argument is that the answer is hidden in the logic itself. Even if we assume that God has been created by a higher being then we can just call the higher being the God. If someone still asked who created this higher being, then we can just say the being that created this higher being would be regarded as God. This chain tends to get confusing and can lead to the statement that the chain is endless and the question of a creator can be asked about everything so there cannot be a prime being. This statement is logically untenable because if the existence of the first being cannot be proved

then we would have to deny the existence of all its creations. Since our world is also one of the creations, we would have to deny the Earth's existence and everything in it. This would simply imply that everything we see is an illusion including ourselves. This would mean that there is actually no world, no sky, no moon, no air, and basically there is nothing at all. This is obviously false because if the first link of the chain is incorrect, then that would imply the very existence of this world is false. So we would have to accept that the world has only one creator to even accept the existence of the world. And it does not matter how long the chain even is because the name "God" can only be given to the creator of the world and we would have to accept this chain cannot be infinite and at some point we would have to accept a being and address him as God.

Second, we will study another main argument that is frequently brought up by atheists. This argument is that the law of nature cannot be the creation of a high and powerful being because it sometimes acts blindly and with great cruelty. What they are trying to say is that many innocent people are killed every day for crimes they did not commit and careers of successful people are suddenly ended so there can be no God due to this argument. In reality, there are actually 2 main laws that function in the universe that control the processes of life. They are the law of nature and the law of Shariah. The reason why people come to the argument that the law of nature often contradicts itself is because they do not differentiate between the 2 laws. The law of nature is that everything, every action, and each simple or compound object in the world is given specific natural characteristics which manifest it as a result of natural causes. For example, arsenic has the characteristic to kill living things. A human would naturally die from arsenic unless another law of nature acted upon the situation. Also, if a person who does not know how to swim were to enter deep water, it is by the law of nature that he would drown. These laws are independent of each other everything that enters the laws will be affected in the outcome.

On the other hand, the law of *Shariah* is a code of life claimed by different religions as having been sent by God for people to follow so they can improve their morals and attain a closer relationship to God. This law does not force an outcome and the rewards or punishments of the deeds performed in this world are reserved for the hereafter. The general rule for both of the laws would be that any good deed done under the law of *Shariah* contributes towards the reward of *Shariah* but has not effect on the law of nature. For example, if one pious man and one malevolent man are sitting under a collapsing room, then they would both die. The fact that one of the men is extremely pious and benevolent does not play into the role of the law of nature but rather the law of *Shariah*. In conclusion, these two laws are very distinct from each other and are very important because they convey the point that the mentality of a man contributes to the law of *Shariah* but does not affect the law of nature because these two laws never interfere with each other due to the well and mastered planning of God the gracious.

Advantages in Believing in God

It's a natural feeling that when you are about to perform an action, you expect to gain an advantage or achieve a reward out of it. One of the greatest ways to achieve a reward and gain a plethora of advantages is to believe in God. Believing in God has multiple advantages that can benefit a man as well as all of mankind but there are two very distinct and important advantages a man gains from believing in God. The two main advantages would be that he would be dissuaded from evil and he would gain the personal satisfaction and answer to life.

First, one of the most beneficial advantages a man gains from believing in God is that he is naturally dissuaded from evil and performing sins. There are three main factors which help a man keep away from evil and sins and they are: performing an action because a person believes he will get some reward or benefit as a result, he fears punishment, and the fact that if a man has gained spiritual insight of ethical deeds then he detests sins for his own sake. Whoever believes in God knows that God heavily dislikes sin so if a man is guilty of a sin then he knows he will have to pay consequences for his actions. But if a man abstains from sin, then he knows that he will win the pleasure of God and this will allow him to achieve the rewards that God has concealed. Anyone who holds this belief will be protected against sin as compared to those who do not believe in God. Also, if a man has sufficient belief in God, then he knows that God is all knowing and always watches over every man on earth and this fact will

alone keep a man way from sin. For example, the police cannot control all of human society. Therefore, no matter how good a country's police for may be, it would be impossible to eradicate crime. On the other hand, the belief in God is the only force that can watch a man at all times. If a person commits a sin impetuously, then his faith will make him feel ashamed of it and he will not repeat it in the future. The one who advances in his own faith becomes indestructible in the face of sin and gains God's happiness and glory.

Second, one of the most significant and beneficial advantages a man can gain from God is to gain true satisfaction about life. The fact is that a man cannot do justice to anything unless he is at peace with himself. We can look at atheists and how discontented they are with the worry of what would become of them if they were proved wrong and if the world actually had a creator. Atheism is not based on certainty but is rather based on the fact that an atheist cannot find sufficient evidence to believe in God. But the belief in God is based on solid reason and one who does believe in a mighty being finds true satisfaction in himself and in life. The minimal possibility of the non-existence of God does not even pose a problem for a believer because there is simply no harm in accepting a God who does not exist. From whatever angle we study this from we can conclude that the belief in God always carries a deep sense of satisfaction with it and we can see this from the Holy Quran where it says, "Aye! It is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort (al-Ra'd 13:29)."

God has laid out the necessary signs for mankind to believe in a mighty and all-knowing being. It would be foolish of mankind to ignore these obvious signs just as the atheists have. The atheists have proposed arguments which are based on dilapidated logic while God has laid out sufficient and solid evidence of his existence. Following the path of existence of God will allow mankind to achieve true happiness and satisfaction which God has hidden in the hearts of every human. May all who gain knowledge of the existence of God accept it and have faith in the all mighty and powerful being and achieve true happiness in their lives.

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HADITH

Hadhrat Zaid bin Thabit[ra] relates that the Messenger[saw] of Allah told him to learn the Syriac language.

Another version is that he[sa] directed me to learn the language that the Jews use for correspondence, as I do not have confidence in the Jews' translation of my correspondence. He further relates that within fifteen days I learned that language. After this, whenever he needed to write anything to them I wrote that to them and whenever they wrote to him, I read their letter to him.

(Tirmidhi abwabul adab bab ma ja'a fi ta'limul siryaniyyah)

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My Response to Recent Unfortunate Ads on CTA Buses

Ismail Ahmad, Chicago West

The beauty of a nation in which
my tongue is free,
Where knowledge flows so vast,
And lock is met with key.

But some, they just don't get it.
As if they can not hear,
They spew out darkened words-
in hopes to bring a tear,

A tear towards the heart-
That acts like gasoline,
Meant to run a flame-
And only to be mean.

So thus the beauty of Quran,
of which permits free speech,
But throws light upon one's
tongue-
To watch what it may preach
.
Be of who you are,
Or how you choose to pray,
And stand with what is logic,
Take heed and stay away

From those who are but weak,
And speak in ways unclean,
And babble of but useless speech
In hopes to make a scene.

As an Ahmadi Muslim,
I preach to use the pen,
To smother out the flame and
hurt,
Bring freedom once again.

****

A BIG TRAGEDY AT SIKH GURDAWARA IN MILWAUKEE, WI
2500+ Guests Served by Milwaukee Jama'at

Bashir Ahmad, Milwaukee

On August 5, 2012, a mass shooting took place at a Sikh temple (Gurudawara) in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, with a single gunman killing six people and wounding four others. The gunman, Wade Michael Page, a white supremacist, shot several people of the Sikh faith at the temple, and also a responding police officer. After being shot in the stomach by another officer, Page fatally shot himself in the head.

In these days the Midwest Regional *Tarbiyyat* Camp was being held in Milwaukee and was being attended by several *Ansar, Khuddam* and *Atfal* of the region.

Immediately the Members of *Jama'at* Milwaukee condemned this act of violence nationally. Several Members of the *Jama'at* immediately approached the Sikh Community sympathized with them and conveyed the condolence.

On Friday August 10th, 2012 the combined funeral services of the deceased's was held, which was named as Memorial Day. The venue of Memorial Day was Oak Creek High School, in the city Oak Creek, Wisconsin. This Memorial service was attended by more than 5000 people including the US Attorney General, Governor of Wisconsin, a few Congressmen, the Mayor of Milwaukee and other cities, the Chief Minister of Punjab, India and other dignitaries of the Milwaukee area. There was also a huge attendance of Sikh members from different states of USA, Canada, India and other countries of the world. Our Regional Missionary Imam Inamul Haq Kauser Sahib and our President Haji Nasirullah Ahmad Sahib also attended the memorial services and conveyed their condolence to the community and to the victims' families.

The Milwaukee *Jama'at* based on Humanity & Sympathy, offered the Sikh Community to serve food to the member of Gurudawara and to the guests attending the Services, which they accepted gladly.

Our President Sahib Haji Nasirullah Sahib then approached Masood Malik Sahib, General Secretary USA who after consulting *Na'ib Ameer Sahib* approved a Budget of $1500.00 for this Nobel Service.

The organizers of Sikh Community requested us to serve vegetarian sandwiches, *bread pakora*, ginger tea and water. Teams were formed to complete different tasks including purchasing, preparation, cooking, packing, logistics, distribution and wrap-up.

Several members of the *Jama'at* took part in this program and worked tirelessly from Thursday, August 9th 9:00AM to Friday August 10th 1:30PM serving more than 2500 guest.

The organizers and the members of Sikh community greatly appreciated our hospitality and prayed for our *Jama'at.*

In this Nobel task 6 *Ansar,* 8 *Khuddam,* 3 *Atfal* and 8 *Lajna* and 2 *Nasirat* including myself (Bashir Ahmad) and our Sec. *Ziafat* Jamal Nooruddin Sahib worked almost 30 hours participated with vigorous and full zeal.

Following are the members of the Milwaukee *Jama'at* who devoted their time; deserve special prayers.

ANSAR

Manzoor Akhtar-Bashir Ahmad-Syed Imran Mudassir-Naseer - Nasir-Wadood Ahmad Tariq-Mahmud Ahmad Mubshar

KHUDDAM

Rizwan Ahmad-Fawaak Manzoor-Shahrukh Mubshar-Jamal Nooruddin-Mujeeb Khan-Masroor Ahmad-Tanzil Ahmad-Wajahat Ali.

Atfal

Zohaib Mubshar-Huda Mubashar- Faqeet Ahmad of Chicago West

LAJNA

Asma Ahmad-Nyla Ahmad-Fozia Ahmad-Wajiha Khan-Mahmooda Nasir-Raisa R Manzoor-Bushra Mubshar-Noreen Ahmad.

Nasirat

Gohar Nasir-Sadaf Nasir

****

A PRAYER IN PUNJABI INVOKING KINDNESS AND BENEVOLENCE OF ALLAH ALMIGHTY

Muhammad Sharif Khan, Philadelphia

Respected Master Ahmad Ali Sahib (Retired teacher T. I. High School, Rabwah) has remembered his loving and kind mother Ayesha Ranjhi in his article published in Alnoor (Aug-Sep. 2012). His father Mian Taj Din passed away when Master Sahib was four years of age, and his younger brother was still an infant.

She cared for both her children single handedly. Despite difficulties she educated them, in religion and school. She took every pain to transport the children to far flung schools, taking them by horseback. She had a great love for the Holy Qur'an. Women from all over the village would come to listen to her melodious recitation of the Holy Book during month of Ramadan. She had committed to memory various positions of Holy Quran and would often repeat them. She taught several women how to read the Holy Qur'an.

The sudden death of her brother in 1947 shook her, and she fell ill because of the grief. She passed away in 1985. She was a *Moosi,* and is buried in *Bhashti Maqbrah,* Rabwah, May her soul rest in peace, Amin.

She would go out of way to help the needy and oppressed. She had knowledge of religious norms and would guide village women. She came from the village to live with me in Rabwah. She liked the holy environments in Rabwah.

She would often recite the following composition in Punjabi in her typical melodious Punjabi tone, with dedication and love. The composition really speaks the voice of every Ahmadi heart. May *Allah Ta'ala* Grant her Peace and bestow His Mercy on her, *Ameen.*

وڈیا مہراں والیا سائیاں رب غریب نوازا

O Lord of great Benevolence, Kindness, and Sustainer of destitudes

اپنے فضل وکرم تھیں کھولے رحمت دا دروازہ

Open the door of your Kindness with Mercy and Benovalence

رحمت دا دریا الٰہی ہردم وگدا تیرا

The river of your Kindness, O my Allah! is ever flowing

جے ہک قطرہ بخشیں مینوں کم ہوجاوے میرا

A drop from it will settle my problems

وچ خزانے تیرے یارب ہرگز تھوڑ نہ کائی

O my Sustainer, no loss is imaginable in your riches

ہر محتاج نمانے کارن رحمت تیری آئی

Since you shower Kindness upon every destitute and needy

جے گر ساڈیاں عیباں کارن تیرا فضل نہ ہوندا

If we had no hope of your Kindness despite of our short commings

دفتر کالے بدیاں والے کون اساڈے دھوندا

Who would have washed heaps of our sins!

HURRICANE SANDY: RELIEF EFFORTS

Salaam Bhatti

I have always known that Allah works in mysterious ways, but I never quite saw how He moved His believers in those mysterious ways. Hurricane Sandy battered the New York area with nearly crippling blows. A few of us *Khuddam* on Long Island came together with Zeshan Hamid to feed over 1000 hungry people. I thought this was going to be quite a task with only a handful of us, but I was ready to roll up my sleeves and get to work. However, about a half hour after we started the food preparation, our brothers from Manhattan and Queens showed up. I was shocked to see them come out quite a way, considering so many of us were experiencing hardships like gas shortages. We welcomed them most heartily and continued our task. Then, literally out of nowhere, Khuddam and a Nasir from Connecticut arrived. They traveled 2 ½ hours to come help our grief-stricken area. This was even more surprising to see. About ten minutes later, a contingency came from Central Jersey, which is also about 2 hours away. At this point, I was reeling with excitement. Look at how Allah brought so many people from so far away together in such a short time for such a great cause. But, it's not over yet. A few minutes before we left, Khuddam from Silver Spring, MD arrived. My soul exploded at this point. We had about 30 Ahmadi Muslims ready to march into hurricane shelters and feed the hungry.

I will always remember walking into the Red Cross shelter and seeing the assistant manager watch us come in. Tears filled her eyes and she said, "This is amazing."

In the middle of November, I drove slowly down a worn and battered road in Long Beach, New York to help the Sandy relief effort.

The frequent red lights at intersections ensured that anyone driving through stopped long enough to survey the damage and witness the tragedy first hand.

Sandy ripped through the area a full three weeks earlier. Yet, heaps of garbage, furniture, and unusable machinery continued to pile up on sidewalks throughout every neighborhood. I didn't see any aid trucks rambling through. There were no reporters on scene. And, as expected, I saw no LIPA crews. It seemed like everyone already forgot about the victims. But as I headed to the Long Beach Skating Arena I smiled. It seemed not everyone had forgotten. In front of a headquarters for Humanity First—a disaster relief charity—a long line of people waited to register as volunteers. A long line, and it was only 9am.

Humanity First volunteers came from across the United States and Canada to Long Beach and the surrounding areas to help in the relief effort. Many of these volunteers and organizers, including myself, are Ahmadi Muslims. We take an active step in helping our community however we can. Today's mission was simple—survey necessities, provide necessities, keep moving.

We conducted a thorough neighborhood census. Each household was asked what they needed, it was noted down, and another team came by and performed the necessary work. I was on one of those teams. This was my first time gutting houses and I had a vague idea how the process worked. I envisioned walking into their homes and ripping off their drywall. Turned out, this wasn't far from the truth.

The first home we gutted and cleaned belonged to Daniel and June—a lovely husband and wife couple. We helped them organize their belongings into items to toss or keep. Fishing poles, keep. Magazines, toss. Fancy china, keep. TV, toss. Then, June came across her wedding dress. It was ruined beyond repair.

She cried for a moment, composed herself, and soldiered forward.

"Toss." She said.

That struck me hard. I thought about the charity's name "Humanity First". I put aside the gloves to better connect with her. Who was she? What did she like to do? It is difficult to walk in as a stranger, take people's possessions

and throw parts of their lives away. But it is that much more gratifying to hear about the people and their lives in person, as a friend—as a fellow human being.

Liz owned the second house we visited. We carried two water-logged sofas out of her basement. "Don't scratch the upholstery," I offered—to which Liz cracked a smile. Again, I thought about the "humanity" in "Humanity First". I asked her what she planned to do moving forward. Hope shone in her eyes as she passionately related her plans, and her fears. How would she work full time and also keep her family warm with the fast approaching New York winters? I didn't quite have an answer. "You know," I offered instead, "Humanity First serves hot meals down the road. It won't stop winter, but it can take the edge off. Help yourself okay?" She smiled, we worked, and moved on.

I don't remember how many houses we visited. But each was something I cherished visiting as an American, as a Muslim, as a human being. I realized why there were so many red lights in the city. It's because the city does not want people to just pass on through. The red lights make you stop, look around. They make you park your car and help out however you can.

They make you take another second to recognize that despite all our differences, humanity comes first.

****

PAY ZAKAT

****

INVITATION TO ABU JAHL TO ACCEPT ISLAM

Besides giving the message of Islam to his nearest kinsmen as commanded by Allah the Holy Prophet[saw] started to spread the message of Islam openly to other people. Despite severe opposition he kept on courageously spreading the message. The Holy Prophet[saw] conveyed the message of Islam to various Chiefs of the *Quraish.* The Holy Prophet[saw] personally gave the message of Islam to Abu Jahl (father of ignorance) who was a prominent enemy of Islam. Abu Jahl's hostility earned him the appellation of "father of ignorance" from the Muslims. His real name was 'Amr ibn Hisham.

Hadhrat Mughira bin Shi'ba[ra] relates that he met the Holy Prophet[saw] for the first time when he was walking through an alley along with Abu Jahl. The Holy Prophet[sa] said to Abu Jahl, "O Abul Hikam! Come to Allah and his Messenger. I call you towards Allah." Abu Jahl said, "O Muhammad! Will you not restrain yourself from condemning our idols? If you desire that we be witness to it that you have conveyed the message to us then we affirm to it that you have conveyed the message. I swear that even if I come to know that what you proclaim is correct, I will not follow you." After hearing this, the Holy Prophet[sa] left. Then, Abu Jahl said to me, "I swear that I know he is rightful in what he proclaims. However, when his ancestors, the children of Qusayy said that they are responsible for the management of the Covering of the *Ka'bah,* we accepted it. Then they said that the management of the *Majlis-e-Shura* is also their responsibility and we could not repudiate it. Then they claimed to be the standard bearers of the Flag of the Arabs and we had to accept it. Then, they took the responsibility of serving water to pilgrims; again we kept quiet. However, in the matters of hospitality and almsgiving we competed with them shoulder to shoulder and both tribes became equal. Now they have claimed that the Prophet is from their tribe. I swear, I will never let this happen."

(Dala'ilan-Nabuwwata li-Baihaqi, p. 198, Published by Darul Kutab al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut, Lebanon)

****

Hadhrat Anas[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] stated a *Hadith Qudsi*: "Allah the Most Honored and Glorious says: 'When a servant of Mine advances towards Me a span, I advance towards him a yard, and when he advances towards Me a yard, I advance towards him the length of his arms spread out. When he comes to Me walking, I go to him running.' "

(Muslim kitabudhdhikr waddu'a' bab fadludhdhikr)

ANNUAL CALENDAR FOR 2013

Dear Respected Members:

Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullahe wa barakatuhu.

With the grace of the Almighty Allah, the New York Jama'at has printed its 26th annual calendar for 2013. The theme for this year's calendar is "**Islam and Peace**". As in previous years, we have invested great efforts to make the calendar attractive, useful and accurate. This year's theme provide Qur'anic references on present world turmoil and to bring Peace on national and globally .

You can place your orders in the following ways:

1. Mail your orders at the above address (order form is on the back of this letter)
2. Fax orders at: (718) 479-3346
   Email at: shoeb@alislam.org

The price per copy is only $2, plus postage. The postage rates are as follows, based on First Class/Priority Mail. For 2nd Day Air and Overnight Delivery, the rates are higher.

Quantity	Postage	Quantity	Postage
1	1.40	25	10.00
5	4.50	30	12.50
10	6.00	40	15.00
15	7.50	50	20.00
20	8.00	100	30.00

Kindly pray for the success of the 2013 Calendar and the people who worked diligently to produce it. Since there wasn't any sponsorship, only a limited amount of Calendars were printed. May Allah reward them all. Ameen. The main reason why we have finished printing the Calendars in the month of December is because we hope that you may utilize the calendars as a form of tabligh by giving them to your non Ahmadi friends and neighbors. We wish you a blessed and prosperous New Year.

Jazakumullah!
Wassalam.

Shoeb Abulkalam
Secretary Publications

2013 Calendar Order Sheet

Name: _____

Jama'at: _____

Address: _____
(Street)

_____
(City) (State) (Zip Code)

Phone: (Include area code)_____ Email:_____

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15	7.50	50	20.00
20	8.00	100	30.00

Please send completed order forms to: Bait-uz-Zafar
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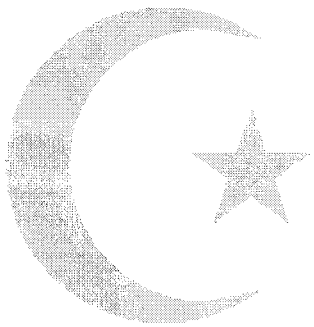
188-15 McLaughlin Avenue
Holliswood, NY 11423



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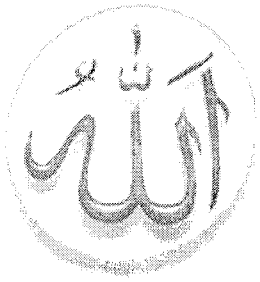


Emergency Contact: Shoeb Abulkalam, *Secretary Publications, NY*

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, ever Merciful

Majlis Ansārullāh

An Auxiliary of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

United States of America

Muslims who believe in the Messiah, Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani (peace be on him)

Hadrat Khalīfatul Masīh Al-Khamis (ayyadahullahu ta'ala binasrihil-'aziz) has graciously approved the following 'Āmila of Majlis Ansārullāh USA for 2013:

Name	Office	Majlis
Wajeeh Bajwa	Sadr	Orlando
Khaled A. Ata	Nā'ib Sadr Awwal	Potomac
Imran Hayee	Nā'ib Sadr Saf Dom	Minnesota
Naseem A. Waseem	Mu'āwin Sadr (Information Technology)	Lehigh Valley
Basit A. Khan	Mu'āwin Sadr (Special Projects)	Baltimore
Maqbool Ahmad Tahir	Qā'id Umumi	Detroit
Rafiuddin Malik	Qā'id Ishā'at (Publication)	Columbus
Rizwan Qadir	Qā'id Ithar (Social Services)	Detroit
Munawar A. Saqib	Qā'id Māl (Finance)	Willingboro
Monas Ahmad Chaudry	Qā'id Ta'līm (Education)	Los Angeles East
Syed Fazal Ahmed	Qā'id Ta'līmul Qur'ān (Education of the Holy Qur'ān)	Philadelphia
Syed Sajid Ahmad	Qā'id Tablīgh (Preaching)	Minnesota
Hassiem Abdullah Babatu	Qā'id Tāhrīk Jadīd	Milwaukee
Muneeb Ahmad	Qā'id Tajnid (Membership)	Chicago West
Muhammed K. Owusu	Qā'id Tarbiyat (Training)	Richmond
Waseem Ahmad	Qā'id Tarbiyat Nau Mubā'i'īn (New Converts)	Indiana
Kalim Wali	Qā'id Waqf Jadīd	St. Louis
Tanvir Ahmad	Qā'id Zehanat wa Sehat-e-Jismani (Health)	Detroit
M. Dawood Munir	Auditor	Cypress-Houston

Please pray that Almighty Allah enable these individuals to serve Majlis in the best possible manner, *Amīn.*

وَالسَّلَام

Sincerely,

Wajeeh Bajwa
Sadr, Majlis Ansārullāh, USA

MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD
HEAD OF THE AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY
IN ISLAM

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
نحمده و نصلي على رسوله الكريم
وعلى عبده المسيح الموعود
خدا کے فضل اور رحم کے ساتھ
هو الناصر

Baitul Fazl, London
28th April 2012
MBE/100

My Dear Waqfeen-e-Nau

اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهٗ

It is the sheer Grace of Allah that your first magazine is being launched at a time when it coincides with the Tehrik Waqf-e-Nau scheme approaching its 25th year, Alhamdolillah. I pray that Allah Almighty may affirm this as blessed in every respect, Ameen.

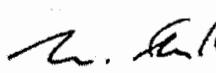
The magazine has been named as "ISMAIL", which reminds us of the sacrifices made by Hadhrat Ismail علیہ السلام and by Hadhrat Hajira علیہا السلام who spent their lives in a desolate and barren place and instituted exceptional standards of sacrifices for the sake of religion. Likewise, it is expected of every Waqif to uphold the covenant of Waqf (dedication) made by their parents even before their birth, who have in turn themselves reaffirmed the same. It is required of all Waqfeen to inculcate in themselves the high qualities of Waqf in the light of the standards set by Hadhrat Ismail علیہ السلام whose sacrifices were accepted by Allah Almighty and who was blessed with the Perfect Man from his lineage. It was this Perfect Man who instigated the great spiritual revolution turning the wild nomads into a civilised race and inspired them to achieve and reflect on the attributes of Allah Almighty. The sacrifices made by them were of a lofty standard, which, in the history of Islam, will be remembered as a golden era. Without being part of an organised structure, they dedicated their lives unreservedly and were fully prepared for every sacrifice to serve the cause of their religion.

Every Waqif, without a shadow of a doubt, is Waqfe Zindagi (dedicated for life) whether or not he is engaged in practical terms to serve the Jamaat. His every word and deed should reflect the highest qualities of a Waqf-e-Zindagi, the epitome of which is Taqwa (fear of Allah). Always bear in mind that you ought to follow the path of Taqwa and every work that you undertake is done only to achieve Allah's pleasure. Safeguard your Salaat and contemplate upon the Quranic teachings and to apply them to

your daily life. For our reformation, Allah Almighty has bestowed upon us the perfect and the true Disciple of the Holy Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم as the Masih Ma'ood and Mahdi. By taking an oath of allegiance to him, we have pledged that we will give precedence to religion over all worldly affairs. We will not achieve this until our words and deeds are in total submission to the Quranic teachings and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم

In order to fulfil our Waqf wholly and in a true sense, we ought to lead our lives in complete submission to the Quran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم and in compliance with the elucidations of the Imam of this age, Hadhrat Masih Ma'ood علیہ السلام This pledge becomes even more significant when we find ourselves facing the commonly accepted concept of 'freedom and independence'; this so called freedom is the root cause of all social and moral decline. It is essential for us to safeguard ourselves from these influences and to become exemplary and symbolic for children and grown ups alike. Therefore, always bear in mind that we should become pious models for the young ones to enable them to tread the path of righteousness. Remember, we are to live our lives in truest Islamic manners in the light of the teachings and instructions of Hadhrat Masih Ma'ood علیہ السلام This is possible only if you maintain loyal affiliation with Khilafat and strive to obey every advice of the Khalifa-e-Waqt and consider yourself to be the main recipient of every directive. If you are able to achieve this, then you have accomplished that pledge with Allah which, you took as a Waqf-e-Nau or which your parents chose by dedicating you even before your birth.
May you accomplish this with Allah's Grace, Ameen.
Wassalam.

Yours sincerely,



MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD
Khalifatul Masih V

HartfordFAVS

: Faith & Values

Faith » Doctrine & Practice

Let's follow a peaceful prophet

Zahir Muhammad Mannan|Nov 27, 2012|Comments (0)

The recent film "Innocence of Muslims" which sparked riots and protests around the Muslim world was not the worst or last deranged attempt to ignite unjust hatred.

Indeed, since Prophet Muhammad's birth to a beautiful couple named Aminah and Abdullah, the meek, poor, unlettered orphan of Arabia's desert has tearfully been the target of repeated physical and character assassinations! But what, some ask, can anyone have against he who humbly served both Creator and creation, while being hailed as the harbinger of loving peace and merciful justice? We could ask the same question about his predecessor; the blessed Messiah Jesus, as we painfully recall his gruesome crucifixion. Or, our noble Patriarch Abraham, when Nimrod savagely cast him into a fiery furnace.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad with his son, Mirza Sharif Ahmad Credit: photo courtesy of Wikipedia

The essential answer lies in this familiar quote; 'these six doth the Lord hate: yea, seven an abomination into him: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness

speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren' (Proverbs 6:16-19). This is more commonly known as 'seven deadly sins'.

So why did Muslims hastily erupt in violence? They should have trusted in the Qur'an, which declares; 'Although they employ diverse tools senselessly to cause distress, chaos and fabricate plenty of calumnies; Grieve not, for you (Muhammad) are most assuredly not, by the tender grace of your loving Lord, in delusion. And certainly for you is a wondrous fathomless reward, without limit, without end. And undoubtedly, you are the one who has conquered and possessed the loftiest moral excellences. And so it will soon come to pass that not only will you realize this but, eventually, everyone else will also behold in awe' (Quran Ch. the Tool/Pen 68:2-6)? The heart strengthening echo of this inspiring promise should have been enough to endure the persecution, which in some cases is 'worse than killing' (Quran Ch. The Cow 2:192).

Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement Mīrzā Ghulām Aḥmad
Credit: photo courtesy of Wikipedia

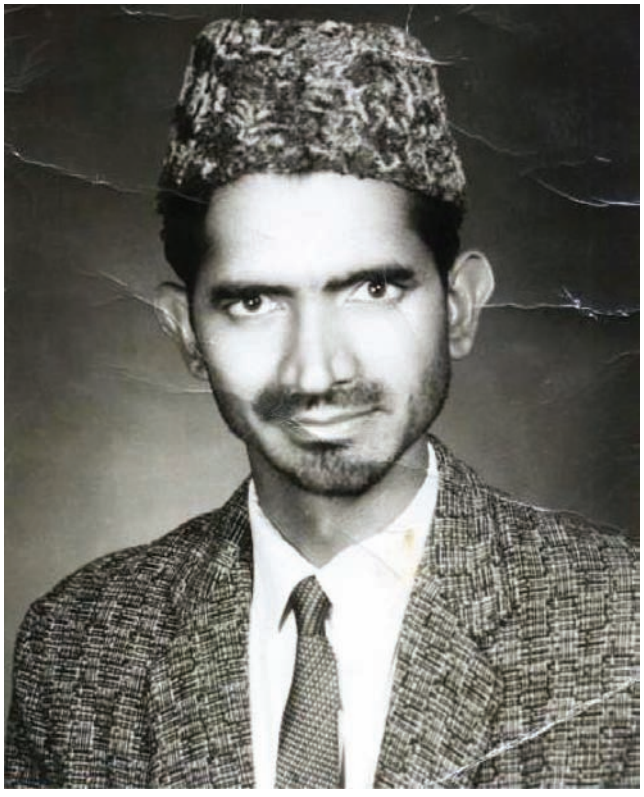
As a member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, I am pleased to convey our peacefully constructive reply mirrored in Prophet Muhammad's brave example; 'And why shouldn't we trust in Allah leaving Him to judge when surely He alone is our Guide and our Way. And, verily, we shall bear patiently and transcend rising above whatever verbal, physical, and emotional harm you put us through' (Quran Ch. Abraham 14:13).

In the same month the abhorrent video was publicized, Ahmadi Muslim Americans raised over 12,000 pints of blood in our nation-wide Muslims For Life campaign to honor 9/11 victims. We walked to raise half a million dollars to help feed hungry Americans during our Walk For Humanity effort. Had those Muslims who resorted to violence instead followed Prophet Muhammad's outstanding example of patience and tolerance, their reputation--and more importantly Islam's reputation--would have been saved, even restored.

American Ahmadi Muslims worked hard to exemplify the gentle beauty of our beloved spiritual teacher and father, Muhammad, and that of past Divine Messengers like Moses and Jesus. It is only by following theirtolerant, flawless footsteps that we have achieved any success in service to humanity. So let's all modestly follow Muhammad's enlivening paradigm; when his enemies brought him down, he vanquished them but not with the sword. Rather, he won them over through benign forgiveness and loving service per the Qur'an's guidance:'Repel evil with that which is best. And lo, the one between whom and thyself was enmity will become as warm friends' (Quran Ch. The Prostration 41:35).

God's reward and love be with you always from your humble servant,

Khuddam, Atfal, and Ansar of Harrisburg/York area participating in "Highway Cleanup" Project



Late Professor Abdul Rashid Ghani Sahib

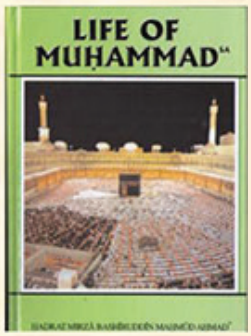
Members of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Milwaukee, Wisconsin provding assistance to Sikh Community of Milwaukee during funeral services of the victims of August 5th 2012 massacre

Religious Founding Fathers Day-Silicon Valley, CA

Participation of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Minnesota in Interfaith Forum

Selected Pictures of Jalsa Salana 2012 Sierra Leone

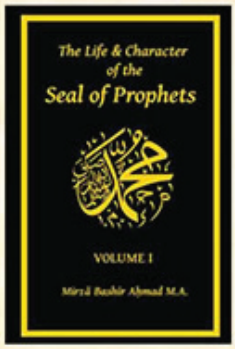
Books on Life of Muhammad[saw]



Life of Muhammad[saw]

by Hadhrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad[ra]

The book is an excellent and affectionate sketch of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] followed by his personality and character in various phases of his life. Full of beautiful teachings of Islam practically shown by the Holy Founder of Islam[saw] – a guideline for everyone's life.
(Pages 395, Price $8.00)



The Life & Character of the Seal of Prophets[saw]

English translation of *Seerat Khatamun Nabiyyinsaw Vol. 1, by Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad[ra]*

This fascinating book not only highlights the various aspects of the life of the Holy Prophet[saw] but also presents the prominent events and episodes in the history of Islam with solid historical testimonies.
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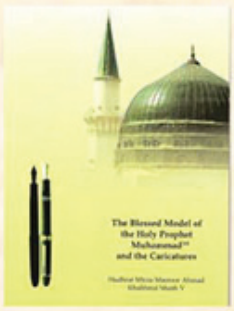

The Blessed Model of the Holy Prophet[saw] and the Caricatures

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba]

Shock waves of indignation ran across Muslim world following the publication of offensive and crude caricatures of the Holy Prophet[saw] . In his Friday Sermon, Hazoor[aba] showed the Islamic ways and means to respond to this kind of situation.
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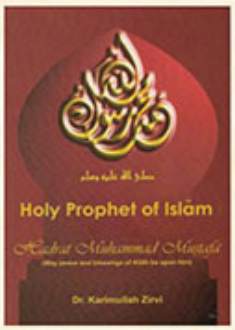

Holy Prophet of Islam[saw]

Dr. Karimullah Zirvi

"…It is a most welcome addition for the English speaki9ng world to better understand the life and teachings of Muhammad peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Through every facet of life, his biography, that needs to be told again and again, reveals a noble character and an excellent exemplar for all of us…"
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